UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE INFLUENCE OF ROLE ISSUES ON COLLEGE WOMEN IN THE CAREER-DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

BY

KAREN L. CHARYNA ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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in
Counselling Psychology.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

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Karen Charyna

10012 87 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6E 2N9

DATE October 04, 1994

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled

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Rosemary Liburd
(Dr. Rosemary Liburd)

MA Bibby
(Dr. Mary Ann Bibby)

Sue M. Scott
(Dr. Sue Scott)

Sharon Crozier
(Dr. Sharon Crozier)

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ABSTRACT

In the midst of today's rapidly changing society women are in a dilemma. Even as opportunities increase, traditional roles still govern their daily lives. For college women, the pressure to be a contemporary, working "woman of the nineties" is great, yet they likely will find themselves expected to fulfill the nurturing roles in their families as well.

The aim of this study is to describe the experience of college women as they are influenced by role issues in the midst of their career-decision-making process. A phenomenological approach is employed in order to fully appreciate the complexity of this process for college women. It is hoped that educators, counsellors and student affairs personnel will benefit from the information provided by the women interviewed, thus advancing the healthy and holistic career-decision-making process of college women.

Five women were interviewed individually, using an interview guide approach. The focus was on discovering rich and meaningful data relevant to the research question. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded according to meaning units and categorized into themes. The participants were involved in two separate member checks to ensure accuracy of interpretation. The analysis process used bears similarities to the constant comparative approach (Glasser & Strauss, 1966, 1970). However, it moves beyond this framework incorporating aspects of the thematic hierarchical clustering approach proposed by Osborne (1989).

The results are reported in three parts. Using the context of time, each woman's understanding of her future, past and present is described. First, the women describe their future dreams, desires and designs for their lives. Second, the influences which have impacted them in the past or are still presently affecting them, are detailed. Third, the women describe their present experience of being influenced by views on women's career and family roles in the midst of their career-decision-making process.

A discussion of the results in conjunction with the relevant literature reveals eight central issues raised by the study. Suggestions for further research and counselling and student affairs implications are offered on the basis of these eight issues.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> *The conflicting choices and norms facing women result in ambiguity and personal uncertainty. Strains experienced by the individual are greater because of the lack of clear societal guidelines and support. Modern women face significant challenges in negotiating the life course to "have it all" (Evans, 1985, p. 12).*

In the midst of today's rapidly changing society women are in a dilemma. Even as opportunities increase, traditional roles still govern their daily lives. As Evans states, the conflicting messages and norms bombarding women cause confusion and stress as they try to make decisions about their future roles.

College women specifically are faced with major life decisions about meshing career and family roles. Particularly at this age, planning for their futures may be fraught with uncertainties. Whether they will marry or have children is an unknown and career success may feel out of their control. Also, the early period of women's career development usually coincides with prime childbearing years.

For college women, then, the pressure to be a contemporary, working "woman of the nineties" is great, yet they likely will find themselves expected to fulfill the nurturing roles in their families as well. Amidst all the pressures and uncertainties inherent in the college years, the perplexing dilemma of anticipating how their future roles will transpire is a recurrent theme for most college women.

Research Question

Through my own experience as a university student along with my observations of other women, I formulated the following research question:

> **In the midst of the career-decision-making process, how are college women influenced by various views on women's career and family roles?**

Secondary questions include:

1)What are the dimensions of the career-decision-making process?
2) What are the associated feelings?
3) How do college women anticipate combining work and family roles?

4) Is there a conflict between work and family roles?

My aim is to understand the experience of college women as they are influenced by role issues in the midst of their career-decision-making process. In this study a phenomenological approach is employed in order to fully appreciate the complexity of this process for college women, contributing to the gaps in our present understanding of how views of women's roles influence college women during the career-decision-making process.

It is my hope that educators, counsellors and student affairs personnel who require constant information on the most current trends influencing students and women of all occupations will benefit from the information provided by the women interviewed. Thus, the healthy and holistic career-decision-making process for college women will be advanced.

Origins Of The Study

My Background Experience

Part of what I bring to this research project is my personal experience. In terms of my background, I was born and raised on a farm on the Canadian prairies. My mother was a "farm wife" who, after twenty-five years of caring for five children, went back to nursing. In my home I learned traditional values about work and family roles.

I have been a student for roughly eighteen years now. My studies have been focused in social sciences and human services. The completion of this research project will signal the end of my most recent journey through academia.

Before entering graduate school I began my career working on a university campus as a resident director. It was through these three years of intensive exposure to college women in the dorms that I began observing some patterns and trends for women in the career-decision-making process. Here, I also was able to see from a new perspective what I had experienced as a student only a few short years ago. I have recorded a few significant elements in my own career-decision-making process, along with my associated reactions:

> **1983** (spring of my high school graduation) I recall being asked repeatedly what I had planned for the "rest of my life." I distinctly remember deciding to lie because it was far easier than telling the truth - that I hadn't a clue and was terrified even thinking about it.
> **(Social pressure; Fear of the unknown.)**
>
> **1984** A woman whom I admired (but hardly knew) "told" me, "You *are*--- going to university next year, aren't you?" And that settled it for me; I was on my way with the confidence of a stranger's accolades.
> **(Social influence; role models; lack of self determination)**
>
> **1984-1988** Then the pressure subsided. First year and second year passed. Finding a major was relatively simple: a divisional major in social sciences - pretty safe. Then in third and fourth year I started to hear the inquiring voices all around me again: "plans?...future plans?...career plans?..." This time I knew I wasn't ready, so I decided to cash in on the now socially acceptable, 'travel-for-a-year' thing. I knew this was my last fling, and that I would need to establish a career direction soon. **(Desire for security; pressure)**
>
> **1989** The un-thrilling conclusion to this part of the story is that the next year, through chance circumstances, along with some nonchalant confidence, I ended up in the right place at the right time to be interviewed and hired as a resident director on a university campus. Suddenly I had started my career. As I mentioned earlier, this job helped me realize my desire for more skills in student counselling, which propelled me on to my graduate work and brings the story full circle to this thesis. **(Chance; Personal experience)**

Evolution Of The Question

At the beginning of this thesis process I was determined to complete a "quick and clean" quantitative study. In the following six months I changed my topic to a related area as well as my research approach to qualitative. After much agonizing, I finally had the piece of mind that I was doing something that really fit for me personally.

Given my professional experience in student development, along with my personal experience, I have had many opportunities to explore the field of women and career development. As I began reading for this project, I knew there were some things in the literature which were triggering my interest in women's psychological development and my feminist/sociological perspective. The more I read in the area, the more I believed there was a critical identity formation process intertwining with women's career development and the more I realized the all encompassing nature of career choice.

My Present Understandings

Taking my personal and professional experience in one hand and the information I have acquired through reading the literature in the other hand, I asked myself what I expected to receive in response to my research question. As I listed the various thoughts and impressions that came to mind I realized how intertwined my experience has become with what I thought other women's experience might be. This is a difficult task!

The following list details some of the main points which I expected to discover through the interview process. These are my perspectives and points of view.

I think/believe/expect/assume that college women:

- ***Hope to get married, have careers, have children and hope it will all work out.***
- *Have **varied awareness** about the views of work and family roles around them.*
- *Are most in touch with **idealistic cultural messages** coming from the media, as opposed to more realistic messages coming from research or experience.*
- *A career goal will often be in place because they think that is **what is expected of them**. They may not be sure they really want to do what they have planned.*
- *They will go the **path of least resistance** (education, nursing - traditional).*
- *They "go" with whatever comes to them rather than setting personal goals.*
- *Have little to **no support**, help or guidance in their career-decision-making process. Especially once they get to university they feel they are expected to be independent and responsible for their future directions.*
- *They believe that if they are '**good**' enough, organized enough, smart enough, etc., then they will be **able to do it all** (career and family).*
- *They believe that **their man will be a "90's" man**, equally sharing the work at home.*

- ***They are not able to picture themselves as mothers.*** *They will have little input, support or guidance in terms of preparing to be a mother - let alone a career mother.*
- *Many women will fight against the way their mother (and father) lived. There is a real* ***aversion to getting into a rut as a housewife.*** *There may be a conflict between what mother does with her life and what a daughter will do with hers.*
- *Women will* ***want freedom to choose*** *as one of their most important values - they don't want to slide into a role that will limit them. They* ***want to have flexibility****. They think that it's just as important for their spouse to be flexible in order to facilitate this.*
- ***Anger*** *about feeling restricted by parents, men and society* ***will fuel their career determination.*** *I expect that women fight against stereotypical roles, fearing that they may get stuck.*
- *They are* ***not sure how their roles will work out.*** *They will make themselves available for both careers and family.* ***There is a huge area of unknown*** *which is disconcerting.* ***Security is desired*** *but there is some hesitation about how much control they really have over their plans, their dreams, their security. Here there may be a conflict between wanting to keep one's plans flexible- to fit into a man's plans, and keeping one's plan very determined, to stay independent and secure.*

My Present Experience

Concluding this portion on the researcher's perspective, I leave the reader with a segment of my journal. The segment portrays the issues of combining and sequencing roles, struggling with attaining goals in the face of barriers and shows how my career and personal issues intertwined.

> *I'm not sure if I had any clue about how much anxiety I would experience as I try to sequence my career with family. Because of my career goals I have had to put off starting a family until I am 30+. I would have been more comfortable having children at a younger age. What if we have trouble conceiving?*
>
> *At this point I am hoping that I can get chartered [with the Alberta Psychological Association] next year - if I can get a job (I may have to take a job which does not pay - I want it that bad). If I am not chartered will I be able to get a job and get paid reasonably? Later would I be able*

> *to get registered? Later, with children in my life will I be able to put in a full year of 900 consecutive hours of supervised counselling? I do not know what will happen later.*
>
> *I do not want to put my children in daycare in the early years, and I want 2 or 3 children - so the early years could stretch out over at least 10 years. Also, since I will be taking time off for child bearing, my husband needs to keep a full-time job to support the family (unless something more flexible can work out without severe drawbacks -financial or other). Even if I work part time during that period of time, would I be able to pass the chartering exams ten years later? Wouldn't it be nice if I could stretch the 900 hours over a longer period of time and include both childrearing and chartering? But the psych association doesn't allow that.*
>
> *I had no idea about how close I could come to being a psychologist yet how difficult it might be to actually fulfill the requirements.*
>
> *As a researcher, I can't help but wonder how it happens for other women.*

Articulating my own process of career-decision-making highlights the biases I must bracket as I conduct the study. My personal experience of being socialized in traditional female roles may parallel the experience of many women in our culture. This is a hunch which may or may not be confirmed. My feelings of desiring personal challenge, growth, and freedom is something I anticipate other women will share. Sensing social pressures to have an amazing career yet feeling unsupported may or may not be mirrored by the experiences of the women I interview.

The expectations I have listed, which obviously reflect my own issues, filter through my professional experience with college women, as well as my academic interest in female development and sociology, revealing what has motivated me to pursue the research question under study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE PERSPECTIVES

A diverse collection of literature sources was consulted in the process of this study. Initially, I will refer to the career literature and report the historical trends of career theory in the attempt to represent the female experience. I will then review the career-related research which has specifically examined the female career experience and will identify themes which are relevant to this study. Then, referring to the literature pertaining to women's general development, a framework will be presented from which to evaluate current career theories for women. Reviewing the literature pertaining to college women's experience in the midst of the career-decision-making process, social trends and their respective effects are identified. Possible explanations are submitted regarding the sources of the influences on these women. A framework for understanding women's healthy development in the midst of the influence of role issues is proposed. Finally, unanswered questions which guide the present study are noted.

Historical Trends

Historically, theories of adult development and career development have moved through similar stages attempting to represent the female experience. In adult development, early theories were based on male subjects alone, then extrapolations were made to address the female experience. Now, after a careful critique of the gaps in the current research, Gilligan (1982) has proposed a parallel theory of moral development placing men and women on equal planes with distinct voices. Similarly, in the field of career development, initially, male theories of vocation were applied to women, presuming their career development was not fundamentally different from that of men. More recently, a trend has emerged wherein theorists are incorporating concepts to explain career development for both of the sexes (Forrest & Mikolaitis, 1986).

Herr and Cramer's (1992) comprehensive text reports some fundamental changes in career theory making it more representative of the female experience. For example, a distinction has been made between occupational models which aim to predict success in certain occupations and the career models which allow a person to move along a variety of pathways motivated by an evolving self concept during the course of one's lifetime. Overall, there has been a progression from the "trait and factor" or "matching" approaches to a more holistic interactional approach to careers (Herr & Cramer, 1992). This acknowledgment of self concept is more consistent with female career development. Additionally, they note that the historical views of the work ethic have changed to acknowledge self-fulfillment as a major motivation to work, a motivation which has often been devalued in women's experience. "The emerging ethic of self-fulfillment represents those who seek challenge, growth, and work that is not so consuming that it denies a place for family, community, leisure, and other aspects of life" (p. 74).

Super (1980) offers a broadened description of career in his life-span life-space approach to career development. More than previous approaches, this developmental approach to career is comprehensive and sensitive to the needs and motivations associated with human developmental phases. Super clearly respects the intimate connection between career development and personal development, thus more accurately describing women's life experiences.

Adding to his "Life-Career Rainbow" model, proposed in 1976, Super refines his conceptualization of the life spaces people live in, meaning the roles people play and the theatres they exist in throughout their life spans. Super emphasizes the sequential nature of careers, pointing out that people hold various positions during the course of a lifetime. Super (1980; 1990) recognizes the "waxing and waning" of life roles and the relative impact these changing roles may have on career pursuits. As the significance of a particular life role crests in emotional and physical involvement other roles, including the career role, may decline in importance, constituting a lifestyle of ongoing and blending roles. This developmental career model acknowledges multiple and intertwining roles and offers a better fit with women's career development experiences.

Over the past 14 years there have been increasing numbers of researchers examining the female experience in career theory. In the early 1980's a number of researchers began looking at the effects of socialization on women's choice of career. Betz (1982, 1989) Hackett and Betz, (1981, 1981, 1987) and Taylor and Betz (1983) began work on self efficacy and specifically non traditional career choice for women. Harmon (1981, 1989) and Jenkins (1989) followed up on her research. Gottfredson (1981) presented an influential theory of circumscription and compromise, once again referring to the effects of socialization on occupational aspiration.

In a key paper in 1984, Astin, who was commissioned to integrate the contemporary research into a comprehensive working model of career development, proposed a parallel theory for men and women. Her theory used a sociopsychological perspective which made it far more comprehensive in its examination of influences.

Since the mid eighties several researchers have contributed to current theories of female career development. Helen Farmer (1984, 1985, 1987) looked at the dimension of homemaking as well as gender differences in the career choice and motivation of women. Hollinger (1988, 1991) wrote specifically for gifted women with the goal of seeing their talents used to the fullest potential. Kahn (1988, 1989) and Kahn and Lichty (1987) addressed the concepts of equality in the workplace. Eccles (1987) and Eccles, Jacobs and Harold (1990) also proposed a more emancipated view of women's power in the career world. Eccles advocates women's ability to choose their lifestyles and career directions.

Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) provide an exhaustive review of the literature published before 1987 regarding women's career development. Beginning with an exploration of women's career choices they introduce two key concepts: career and homemaking. They note the gradual re-conceptualization of the homemaker and career orientations as continuous, assuming neither orientation precludes the other. Homemaking is considered by these authors as "probably the major difference in the career development of women versus that of men, that is, the expectation that women's lives will usually include, if not revolve around, the roles of homemaking and childrearing" (p. 24). This inseparability contributes to the complexity of women's career development process and, correspondingly, the study of this process. Beyond giving a definitional framework they add "that the perceived philosophical incompatibility of the biological role of wife/mother with the social role of worker is the most salient factor in women's career development is one of the major assumptions of [their] book " (p. 203). Various terms are referred to describing this incompatibility as *interrole conflict* and *role overload* (O'Leary, 1977).

Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) succinctly summarize the abundant research discerning the predictors of women's career choice. The major independent variables mentioned include: marital/family status, sex role attitudes, and role conflict. They discuss in great depth factors influencing women's career choices including cultural (i.e. sex role stereotypes), situational (i.e. S.E.S.), and chance elements of the environment (i.e. family background).

In summary of the research on women's career choices, Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) give the following three suggestions to women. 1) Most (if not all) women should pursue careers outside of the home. 2) The serious underutilization of women's abilities in women's career choices needs to be counteracted. 3) Women's career choices should be made in the context of a broad range of perceived and real *options* rather than by default.

Career adjustment for women is the second major focus of Betz and Fitzgerald's text. Their examination of the benefits and drawbacks for working women include the benefits of employment reported by working women, and the problems of work overload, providing adequate child care and living with the social pressures against working mothers - who are often blamed for general social decay. The authors include a discussion of the stresses dual-career couples experience such as overload, values conflicts, sex role discrepancies, and role cycling. They note that "it is also clear that dual-career problems are primarily women's problems" (p. 229).

Themes In Female Career Development

Two key sources were used to investigate the main themes in female career development. These current sources present a well rounded picture of the present scenario.

The first source is by Johnson Smith and Leduc (1992). In their book, *Women's work: Choice chance or socialization*, they offer a rich portrayal of the life experiences of the following researchers - *the experts* - in the field of female career development: Helen Farmer, Helen Astin, Jo-Ida Hansen, Nancy Betz, Constance Hollinger, Jacquelynne Eccles, Lesley Lee/ Karen Messing, Linda Gottfredson, Sharon Kahn, and Sharon Crozier. Based on their own life stories of vocational achievement, messages about women's career achievement were gleaned. The second source is Herr and Cramer's (1992) text, *Career guidance and counseling through the life span.* They provide a summary of the current issues in women's career development literature, essentially reporting on the findings of the researchers named above. What I have compiled is a combination of the researchers' own experiences and thoughts, in addition to a summary of their research findings.

A common theme in the interviews with the women researchers is the powerful influence of gender role socialization, work roles, and personal self-efficacy. They were in agreement regarding the pressures on women created by gender socialization at home, such as a general lack of encouragement to pursue careers. The message from their parents to them as girls was, that they should have families and have a career to "fall back on."

This theme is also stressed by Herr and Cramer (1992) in terms of the effects of stereotyping. Stereotyping often begins at an early age and continues through one's years of work in adulthood. Career choice is often prescripted. Extracurricular activities, personality and even level of success are all influenced by social messages from parents, teachers, and role models often directing women into predictable careers.

Regarding achievement, the women researchers said it is a myth that women do well because they work harder. They attributed their success to chance events later in life saying these chance occurrences fueled their sense of self worth and ambition to achieve later on, often after a period of immobility. Additionally, they said a social price was to be paid for achieving differently than the "normal" female. Parents, teachers, media and role models all preach the same message, herding young people into the socially acceptable roles.

When it comes to planning for the future, the women researchers said encouragement by a respected older adult (role models and mentors) could be a catalyst for ambitions. Herr and Cramer (1992) report that role models and mentors appear to have a strong influence on the career aspirations of women. Often same-sex parents are named most influential in determining a college major or fathers for choosing non-traditional careers.

The women researchers interviewed reported being incredibly naive about career options in their youth. They said there is a need for career counselling in early years. Issues such as working out dual careers in the same city, figuring out how to care for children in the midst of both careers, and finding employment that accommodates both parents' participation in child care were reported as major challenges for these professionals.

Herr and Cramer report that sex differences have not been adequately addressed in past years. More recent theorists have begun to look at the discontinuous nature of women's career development. The primary source of discontinuity is child rearing - the paramount barrier to upward mobility. They state that choice of employment may mediate this barrier and that women must be made aware of the real effects of discontinuous employment. They also report that balancing career and family responsibilities and planning for multiple roles is a reality for college women. They recognize that the career process for women is more complex than that of men.

A Developmental Foundation

The themes occurring in the female career literature as reported by Herr and Cramer (1992) and Johnson Smith and Leduc (1992) bear a striking consistency to the themes suggested by Evans (1985) in her review of female development literature. Evans names five key dimensions of female experience which she believes should be sensitively considered in studies on female career development.

1. Family - We must acknowledge that the family life cycle is still quite rigid, prescriptive and controlling. Many changes are now occurring that no longer allow the old roles to function (i.e. divorce, combined career and family roles, single parenting). Theories need to be flexible enough to recognize that the age at which women bear children affects their life course significantly.

2. Career decisions and career paths - Masnick and Bane (1980) noted three revolutions in women's work: first, increased rate of participation, second, increased commitment to work, and third, increased financial contribution to the home. "They suggested that the first revolution is completed, the second underway, and the third is yet to come" (Evans, 1985, p. 17). Developmental theories need to acknowledge the rate of social change affecting women who work, the barriers they experience, and the needs that work fulfills (i.e. control, autonomy, competence, independence, and contribution).

3. Interpersonal relationships - The literature acknowledges that women are relationally oriented. They are interested in helping and caring for others and are protective of the interests of others. Their decision making reflects this complexity. Roberts and Newton (1987) found that women's relational dreams shaped their future

plans, often resulting in contingency behavior in the search for and maintenance of a significant relationship with a man.

Gilligan's (1982) theory of moral development, based on Chodorow's concepts of attachment and separation, views female attachment orientation as a result of the undisturbed bond with the nurturing mother, as opposed to the male experience of separating from the mother.

4. Self-concept and well-being: "Competence and self-esteem are linked both to the structure of the roles in which a woman finds herself and to the values attached to those roles, both by the woman herself and by society" (Evans, 1985, p. 20). The way women define and describe themselves is qualitatively different from men. Their ways are more adaptable and tolerant of others, often resulting in richer, more complex lives.

Miller (1986) calls for "a new psychology of women" that acknowledges a new starting point for women's development, and recognizes how women develop in a context of attachment and relationships. Surrey (1985) asserts that "women's primary experience of self is relational, that is, the self is organized and developed in the context of important relationships" (p. 2). Gilligan (1982) agrees, saying women are directed more by care and responsibility for others and consequently their identity is formed through connection with others and responsibilities in one's relationships. For the connected self, "relationships are an issue of responsiveness to others" (Lyons, 1983, p. 81). For women this often involves taking an empathic stance with another, anticipating their viewpoint, and promoting the other's welfare, often over one's own welfare. This "self in relation to others" is an essential component of women's identity.

5. The intertwining of the dimensions of a woman's life - "Women's development has been described as a 'braid of threads in which colors appear, disappear, and reappear' (Evans, 1985, p. 20).

This aspect of intertwining is described elsewhere as interdependence, interconnectedness, counterpoint and convergence (Gilligan, 1982). Reinke, Ellicott, Harris, and Hancock (1985) speak of a period of reassessment, or resorting of roles and responsibilities. Brennan and Rosenzweig (1990) refer to a resurfacing-recycling and an interplay of roles, where "women's development is characterized by a dynamic resurfacing-recycling of the achievement-affiliation issue" (p. 527).

This interplay/intertwining perspective stands in stark contrast to traditional linear definitions of development and is overwhelmingly supported by women as an accurate description of the way their identity develops.

These five dimensions of female development which Evans (1985) articulates provide a reasonable and solid foundation from which to evaluate the adequacy of career theories in their treatment of the female experience in the context of career-decision-making. Evans' family, career and interpersonal relationship dimensions seem to concur with the themes which emerged in the current career literature.

The themes emerging from this comparison can be summarized as follows. Socialization occurs through families, interpersonal relationships - role models and mentors, and the larger culture, influencing women in their family, career and interpersonal role choices. While seemingly unobtrusive, this socialization process is a powerful force influencing women in the midst of complex choices concerning their career and family roles. There is agreement about the need for counselling and practical support for women as they make these decisions and balance their multiple roles.

In their conclusion, Johnson Smith and Leduc (1992) ask whether women's vocations are the result of choice, chance or socialization. They say it looks like socialization plays the major role, along with chance. Choice is something we grow into and comes with experience and maturity.

The Current Choices:

To Work, To Have Children, To Combine

The literature regarding today's college women reveals three main social trends influencing these women's career choices. First, most women work outside the home. According to Statistics Canada, in 1986, 54.3% of all Canadian women were employed outside the home. Ciuriak and Sims (1980) project that this portion is expected to reach between 65% and 70% by the year 2000. In addition, Holms and Esses state that a woman will work an average of 30 years in her lifetime.

Second, Mash (1978) as well as Baber and Monaghan (1988) have found that college women intend to combine careers with marriage and children. Baber and Monaghan (1988) in their study indicate that "all of the women expected to have careers, but few planned to be child free or have only one child" (abstract). These first two findings set the stage for the significant pressures college women bear in their attempts to prepare for both career and family roles.

A third trend, gender role differences, creates additional pressure for women. According to Tittle (1982), men tend to view their three key roles of husband, parent and employee as separate, while women view their roles as linked. "Decisions women make in one area of their lives greatly affect, and are affected by, decisions in other areas. As a result, planning becomes more difficult, women's lives are more complex and less predictable, and the stress experienced by women is often great" (Evans, 1985, p. 20). As much as society has changed in terms of women planning to work, O'Brien and Fassinger (1993) maintain that "the career-decision-making process for women includes a component that continues to be outside the consideration of many men: how to select a career that will enable them to function and succeed in the multiple roles of parent, partner, and worker" (p. 456).

Clouding The Choice - Conflicting Socialization

Aside from the three trends mentioned above, the literature is replete with references to apparent barriers to women's career success and the resulting obstacles to holistic wellness and life satisfaction. The pervasive effect of sex role socialization is one of the major themes discussed. A brief review of the contradicting influences of traditional versus contemporary role values will guide our understanding of the conflicting socialization experienced by college women.

Evans, (1985) in her literature review of women's development across the life span, agrees that societal changes have resulted in increased options for women but also notes increased incidence of contradictory role expectations and significant barriers to women's smooth transition into these new roles. Abundant evidence of traditional lifestyles and expectations can be found within the rhetoric of our contemporary, 90's society. For example, decisions concerning geographical location and timing of major family events are often based on the husband's career needs (Evans, 1985); women tend to order their lives around contingencies, being prepared for and adjusting to unpredictable events such as marriage and parenting (Baber & Monaghan, 1988) ; often, women do not seriously plan for a career until they have met and married a life partner (Baber & Monaghan, 1988; Sullivan, 1992).

In addition to the traditional ideals mentioned above, we also find idealism based on contemporary notions, in which motherhood and careers are seen as "a combination to which all women should aspire" (Baber & Monaghan, 1988, p. 200). In Baber and Monaghan's study, 73% of the college women agreed with the statement, "I want it all, to be a parent, spouse, and career person, and am determined to manage it all and do it well" (p. 199). The researchers clearly delineate the dilemma for women stating: "It cannot be determined from the existing data what particular factors are leading these young women to expect to be able to combine demanding careers and the mothering of several children" (p. 199).

Although college women are being empowered to pursue goals previously out of their reach, they may remain unaware of realities which could help them in their career-decision-making process. Considerations may include options for sequencing career and family duties in harmony with one's spouse (Sullivan, 1992) and awareness of realistic discontinuities for career women because of child bearing and rearing (Herr & Cramer 1992). Most women get only six weeks of maternity leave (Baber & Monaghan 1988) and experience unexpected time demands such as elder care (Sullivan, 1992, p. 242).

Quoting Barwick (1990), Hollinger (1991) introduces her paper with the following words: "in some respects, the last three decades represent a period of rapid societal change. Feminist notions considered novel in the 1960's became so common in the 1970's that being *only a wife and mother* was guilt producing. However, the costs of *having it all* and being a *Superwoman* became apparent in the 1980's" (p. 135).

Hollinger (1991) asserts that "of all existing barriers, sex-role socialization's impact on the child's developing self-belief system is the most pervasive and limiting" (p. 136). Johnson Smith and Leduc (1992) point out that early on, especially during the formative school and college years, men are socialized to press on with full time careers, while women are forced to grapple with the choice of nurturing others or pursuing their own achievements. The researchers they interviewed said the goal is not for women to be "just like men" and to ignore their nurturing abilities, but to be able to combine their gifts of nurturing with their work skills in the work place.

They continue, saying that later, in the marriage years, there is a clash between women's expectations that spouses will share domestic responsibilities with traditional views. Finally, in the employment years, the restrictions continue as employers fail to recognize the special physical needs of women such as pregnancy leave and, in general, limit women from entering the labour force after age 30 (Johnson Smith & Leduc, 1992).

Hochschild (1989) explains the emotionally charged issues underlying her study of how couples share the home responsibilities. Wondering how deep a couple's gender ideologies go she says, "I felt the need to understand the ways in which some men and women seemed to be egalitarian 'on top' but traditional 'underneath,' or the other way around" (p. 14). Hochschild cautions couples to re-examine what they think they are sharing and what they actually share. Often, the wife, working the second shift, does not identify what Hochschild has estimated as an extra month of work women average over the course of a year. She believes the women she interviewed did not admit they were overloaded because they wanted so badly to be in egalitarian relationships.

Hollinger (1991) pinpoints the damaging psychological effect of this lifelong socialization process saying that if women view their options as either/or options, wherein they must choose satisfaction from work or satisfaction as a mother, the outcome is often associated with regrets over missed opportunities. By choosing only a career, women frequently regret not having a family, or conversely, choosing to be a full time mother can result in missing the opportunity to work. "While the consequences of such *either-or* choices are costly, the decision to *have and do it all* is far from being consequence free. Stress, burnout, depression, health problems and alcohol abuse are but a few of the observed costs associated with the *superwoman* approach to life" (Hollinger, 1991, p. 137).

The Pathway To Maturity

Mash asks "what will render family and career more congruous for women, and to what extent is congruity possible?" (1978, p. 76). This is an excellent question guiding the present study. Gilligan (1982), in her work on the parallel gender voices in moral development, offers an explanation for the conflict experienced by women. She agrees that women and men struggle to find a balance between independence and dependence, or in this case achievement and nurturing. She describes this struggle as the pathway to maturity, where the perspectives of the connected and separate selves seek to find a way to converge.

This is a difficult balance for women since they often have not learned to be assertive or to look out for their own interests. Involvement in independent and achievement-oriented pursuits may entail the risk of neglecting relationships and responsibilities often tied to parenting or family roles. This risk is often avoided in preference of a "safe" compromise of self (Brown & Gilligan, 1992). Brown and Gilligan warn that what may follow is an internal compromise of one's whole identity by ignoring the dimension of independence, resulting in a shallow and conflicted representation of the self.

Jack (1991) offers a perspective on women's experience of losing one's self. Under the influence of Carol Gilligan, Jack places women's orientation to relationships as central to their identity and states that being heard is the only way to elevate that which has been pushed down and depressed - the self. She believes assertion of one's agency promotes development through relationships.

In relational theory, Jack (1991) says that women will accommodate to others' preferences, which can be the beginning of altering one's self, by conforming and shutting down large parts of their experience in the attempt to fit in. Often cultural norms about women's responsibilities around self sacrifice, and caring for others leads to a loss of self. Further, the cultural taboo against expressing anger limits women from getting their needs met. Jack says "what women lose in depression is not the whole self but only a part of the self: the 'I', the authentic, creative self" (p. 101). Through the identification of voice, Jack says women "can be heard and found" (p. 103).

Brennan and Rosenzweig's (1990) model of development proposes that "the core of development, woman's self-understanding, evolves through the interplay among the relationships, roles, and work in which she engages" (p. 527). They define this self-understanding as a "woman's cognitive construct of her personal characteristics and the way in which current roles, relationships, and work are congruent or do not fit with these characteristics" (Brennan & Rosenzweig, 1990 p. 529). Adjustments are made when the incongruence is too great. Once again the function of an ongoing adaptive process directs the progress of maturity. This interplay of roles is designated the "crucial spur" in women's development.

As Gilligan (1982), Brown & Gilligan, (1992) Brennan and Rosenzweig (1990) and others agree, this essential concept of self-understanding in identity development truly can be freeing and motivating. As young women squarely confront multiple role options and openly value and integrate the varied dimensions of human experience into their career/life planning, a passage opens up. By practicing honesty with self, vulnerability with others, and courage in conflict a narrow but fulfilling road may lead to growth and wholeness.

In summary, the literature indicates that college women are choosing to work and have families concurrently. Conflicting socialization clouds their choices, creating uncertainty. For example, gender role differences found within work and family relationships increase stress levels for women as their combined role expectations put them in a double bind between traditional expectations and contemporary ideals.

The tension women experience seems to stem from a contradiction between the rate of change in society's ideals and the actual change in terms of gender socialization. Although more women are pursuing careers, there are factors making this transition into work roles very difficult for them. While traditional values continue to emphasize women's responsibility in nurturing roles, the incorporation of contemporary career roles is often overwhelming, conflicting and ultimately confusing for many women.

Gilligan describes women's experience of conflicting role options as an expedient pathway to maturity. While the perspectives of the connected and separate selves seek to find a way to converge, women's development evolves through the interplay among her relationships, roles, and work.

Unanswered Questions

Many questions still need to be answered in order to understand the career development process of women. I have reported many findings confirming the idea that women's career development is complex, involving multiple factors. Evidence of conflicting socialization is plentiful, confirming the need for some type of social change.

As I read through the literature I found researchers suggesting the need for further research on more focused questions. Questions about how women make their career choices and what influences them in their role choices are presently neglected. We need a clearer understanding of how women anticipate and prepare for their future roles. What are the bases of their plans and how realistic are they?

Baber and Monaghan (1988) note that while young women have been rethinking their career options and expanding their occupational horizons, there has not been a reciprocal rethinking of their childbearing expectations. Their career orientation seems to exist in a separate sphere from marriage and childbearing expectations. Farmer believes college women need to be helped to "plan for their future roles, both more realistically and more in line with their interests and talents" (p. 117). Holms and Esses' (1988) and Sullivan (1992) also focus on the perceived need to prepare women for the reality of the labor market.

O'Brien and Fassinger (1993) present one of the most up-to-date multivariate causal models of career orientation and choice for adolescent women. They identify a focus on balancing career and family responsibilities and suggest that planning for multiple roles is a major need for college women. They specifically call for further research in order to better understand the measurement of career choice including realism and congruence, and to investigate the origins and development of young girls' beliefs about the role of women in society.

Another concern which continues to provide motivation for this study is how helping professionals may assist women through this difficult time. Baber and Monaghan (1988) say, although women believe that if they are responsible, organized and flexible they should have little difficulty performing their roles, actually, their goals often go unrealized because of the lack of role models and institutional support. Baruch (1983) notes that young women undergo a great deal of stress when making career choices because of the pressure to balance career and family. Often these choices are made with little information (Sullivan, 1992). The need for institutional support through counselling and student affairs staff is articulated by Baber and Monaghan (1988) who maintain that men seem to have found a way to separate parenthood from work roles, traditionally, but they do not see this as a likely destiny for women. For this reason they call for a response from the human services:

> College women in our society now receive formal preparation, advisement, and counseling regarding their occupational choices. No such attention is given to choices regarding parenting or the combination of career and parenting roles. How do we best advise young women? How do we empower them to make informed choices and develop workable plans for themselves? (p. 202)

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

In the early stages of this study my intended method underwent a dramatic shift, from quantitative to qualitative. This chapter flows from what I have learned in the ensuing months about qualitative methods of research. This shift has involved a philosophical transformation, in terms of my research perspective which necessarily has filtered down through my approach as a researcher as well as my techniques of data collection and analysis.

An exploratory study was conducted as a part of a qualitative research course. Using a question similar to the question being explored in this study, one interview, one observation, and one document analysis were triangulated. Based on the findings of this exploratory study plans were made to continue with a refined question using interviews only.

Design Of The Study

Perspective

> *The western research model of science has elevated a distorted concept of objectivity above its natural counterpart, subjectivity, thus dichotomizing our knowing and being (Polanyi, 1958, p. 30).*
>
> *Until the dichotomy is fought or overcome by a new philosophy that unites our knowing and being, we shall remain alien to ourselves and our world (Gelwick, 1977, p. 30).*

After years of extrapolations from male-oriented research being applied to women, psychological research has finally begun to acknowledge the uniqueness of the female developmental experience (Evans, 1985; Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986; Peck, 1986). In turn, career research must also reflect this diversity through the use of appropriate methods allowing for the most accurate expression of the female experience.

Harding and Hintikka (1983) put it succinctly:

> We cannot understand women and their lives by adding facts about them to the bodies of knowledge which take men, their lives, and their beliefs as the human

> norm... Furthermore, it is now evident that if women's lives cannot be understood within the inherent inquiry frameworks, then neither can men's lives (p, ix).

The employment of a qualitative approach in this study is an effort to hear what is actually transpiring in these women's lives as they are influenced by role issues. The approach to research in all domains stands to be enriched through the recognition of a long missing female voice.

Approach

The qualitative approach to research is holistic, allowing for many-faceted interpretations of complex human experience. In qualitative research accurate understanding and description of the observed phenomenon or experience is the goal of the researcher. My question is grounded principally in the phenomenological paradigm which seeks to appreciate the multiple realities expressed by the participants and to derive and express new understandings from the described experiences.

Overall a phenomenological approach, using individual interviews is employed in this study in order to fully discover what it is like for these college women to be influenced by various views of women's career and family roles in the midst of their career-decision-making process. Attentive interviewing and listening skills were used to grasp and describe the essence of these women's individual experiences.

The narrative researcher interprets the data along with participants drawing mutually agreed meanings about the person's experience in a place and time. What they agree upon is called a narrative unity which captures the person's rich and varied experience temporally, much as a story effectively encapsulates a character's experiences within a plot (Clandinin & Connelly, 1986). This approach has guided the interpretation and reporting of the data in various degrees.

Ensuring Trustworthiness

Specific efforts to sustain a valid expression of these women's experience have been made. In research theory, Maxwell (1992) maintains that the foundation of validity begins with describing the facts observed, then adding interpretation of meanings of the data. This provides an appropriate model for this research.

Maxwell (1992) states "validity is always relative to, and dependent on, some community of inquirers, on whose perspective the account is based" (p. 284). In this study participants were invited to evaluate my interpretations of their interviews (member checks). The use of current literature in the discussion of the results serves as triangulation of theory which may be considered a cross check, seeing how other assumptions may change or alter the explanation of the findings.

The qualitative researcher is interested in "to **which** other settings and subjects [the findings] are generalizable" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992 p. 45). The findings I have reported are contextual, found in common within a particular group of people in a particular situation, and may be treated as a working hypothesis from which to compare other contexts. Patton (1990) suggests the cardinal principle of credibility is to limit the findings and methods to the context in which the study was done.

Qualitative research occurs as a filtering process through the researcher. Consequently, Patton (1990) emphasizes the importance of researcher integrity and intellectual rigor (i.e. returning to the data, giving one's utmost effort in disproving theories, being thorough, disciplined and complete). Once accountability is established through visible processes such as an audit trail and field notes, the researcher can objectively focus on the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

"Because you [the researcher] are so central to the collection of the data and its analysis... you must be extremely self-conscious about your own relationship to the setting and about the evolution of the design and analysis" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.121). One way I controlled for my own bias was through the vigorous use of reflection in journalling and field notes. These have helped me be aware of and bracket my own perspectives. My goal is to avoid making personal modifications of the actual data through being grounded in the data and accountable to the intent of the participants.

Data Collection Procedure

Selection Of Participants

Participants were invited to be involved in this study through advertising on the campus of the University of Alberta. The following typical case profile was used to determine suitability for involvement in the project.

Population profile:

1. Female college/university student
2. At least half way through her academic program, (3rd or 4th year in most programs), anticipating graduation and in the midst of decision-making regarding her future.
3. Between the ages of 20 and 25.

A letter explaining the nature and purpose of the study was sent to each potential interviewee (Appendix A). A consent form, ensuring adherence to ethical guidelines (consent to participate in the proposed study, provision to opt out of the study at any time, and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity) was enclosed for the women to sign if they decided to participate (Appendix B). Once an agreement was made appointments were set up for an interview. Five participants were contacted and agreed to participate in the study.

Introduction Of Participants

Ashley (23 years old). Ashley described herself as a hard working, quiet person. Her overall goal is to enjoy life. Ashley comes from a close family whom she loves dearly and has been deeply influenced by.

Ashley is in her last year of her university training in a helping profession. She says there is a good possibility that she may marry soon so her career plans involve working for a few years before having children. She would prefer to stay home with her children until they enter school. She desires to keep her professional skills at a level where she can continue working in the future.

Dani (20 years old). Dani is a very active person, enjoying several team and individual sports. She described herself as someone who likes challenges. Dani also described her family life as very supportive.

In her fourth year of Nursing, Dani says working with people is something which she is attracted to. Overall she sees working hard as an important value in her life and "doing the best you can do" is a motto which guides her.

Marie (23 years old). Marie used the words social, honest, open and frank to describe herself. If she could she said she "would sit on a rock and talk with the whole world." She used the phrase "jadedly unjaded" to describe herself.

Marie's mother died of cancer three years ago, leaving behind her brother, Father and herself. Marie described her parents' marriage as unhappy and one in which her mother was stuck.

Marie is in her sixth year of university. She has just completed her degree in Occupational Therapy. Her dream is to help people in other cultures who have less than her.

Tara (23 years old). Tara said she is an active, driven and competitive person. She is heavily involved in athletics. Tara described herself as a very organized person who likes to make plans and to be prepared.

Tara's mother raised her three children alone after Tara's father died when Tara was two. At that time her mother went back to school to train for accounting, taking night classes. For the most part, Tara was raised by a nanny who Tara says was excellent.

In her fourth year of Home Economics, Tara is specializing in Foods and Nutrition. Her goal is to have a private practice in dietetics.

Lori (23 years old). When I asked Lori how she likes to spend her time, she identified talking to people as her favorite past time. Lori says others may describe her as someone who is very soft-hearted, especially when you get to know her very well.

Lori has been married for ten months. She described her own family as really close, with her mother as the prominent leader, and her extended family as matriarchal.

In terms of her education and career, she is a fourth year psychology student presently working on a BA. Her short term goals may involve going into social work. Lori anticipates getting more education before she and her husband start a family.

Interview Process

Before the actual interview I met with each woman at the university for about twenty minutes. At this time we introduced ourselves to one another and discussed the process of the study and their involvement in it. I asked each woman to describe herself to me in a way which would help me to introduce them in this study.

After this brief introduction we moved to a quiet room and began the interview. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and a half. I used an interview guide in each of the interviews (Appendix C). Prompts were utilized to encourage free expression of their thoughts and associated feelings and concerns. My focus was on allowing the women to express their experience in an authentic and relaxed manner in order to discover rich and meaningful data relevant to my question. Reflection of content helped me to ensure my understanding of the discussion during the interviews. Interviews were audio taped.

Analysis

The analysis process used in this study bears similarities to the constant comparative approach (Glasser & Strauss, 1966, 1970). However, it moves beyond this framework incorporating aspects of the thematic hierarchical clustering approach proposed by Osborne (1989).

To begin the analysis process the interviews were transcribed verbatim, as were the field notes. The transcription was divided into meaning units, then paraphrased and coded. Through the process of reading and re-reading the data I eventually became very familiar with it. With each round of reviewing the transcripts came new levels of abstraction. Each time my impressions and insights into the many layers of meaning contained within the interview were recorded. The fourth time through the data I began noting similarities and differences and emerging themes. The following steps were taken in the analysis process.

Steps

- all interviews had field notes dictated almost immediately after the interview. They were then transcribed

First round (listening to tapes)
- all the interviews were transcribed verbatim (affect included)

Second round (listening)
- for omissions and accuracy

Third round (reading)
- meaning units were drawn in to the transcript
- more notes were dictated

Fourth round (reading)
- next, paraphrasing each meaning unit, chronological sections were divided, giving each section a heading and subheadings
- quotable quotes were highlighted on the transcript
- some phrases and words were circled or underlined to identify repeated words, ideas and potential themes
- question marks were place to the right of any verbatim which was confusing and needing clarification from participant

Fifth round (reading)
- tags were coded beside paraphrases
- single spaced transcript was blocked into sections using heading and subheadings for "at a glance" summary of interview topics

Sixth round (dictating summary)
- summary notes - a chronological summary of my interpretation of what was discussed in the interview was dictated and transcribed.

- the highlighted "quotable quotes" were compiled

- a coding check was done for one interview which was difficult to interpret

- a "tag chart" was used to compare the most synthesized level of codes

- using the summary notes a five page summary "story" of the themes from each interview was written

- finally, one page of notes for each interview was written synthesizing each woman's themes. I also suggested a metaphor descriptive of her experience

Explanation Of Notes And Terms

1) **Field notes** were done after each interview and included an introduction based on the woman's self description as well as my initial impressions immediately after the interview.

2) After transcription and meaning units were drawn in, **additional notes** were dictated and transcribed (more of my impressions, questions, and reflections).

3) After the coding process and division of sections another set of **summary notes** were written, summarizing my interpretation of the interview data.

Using the final summary story I met with each participant for a "member check" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After reading the summary I had prepared, I asked each woman for responses to and corrections of my interpretations of her interview. Copies of the transcript were given to each woman at this time. Since I required clarification on several specific parts of the transcripts, I referred the women to the corresponding portions and took notes as I listened to their explanations.

The sequencing of analysis which occurred before I could write up the themes involved three basic stages.

First, I began by sorting into categories a comprehensive list of "tags" which I had compiled from the coded transcripts. An outline began to form based on the categories I saw emerging from the tags along with my "gut impressions" of what constituted the three most poignant themes. The outline divided the women's experience into past and present influences, present experience, and future dreams.

Second, using the Pro File program I sorted my interview data into 11 themes under the three main sections. Scanning through every interview transcript I stored almost every piece of the data into a theme category. Some quotes were stored into multiple themes.

Third, for each of the three sections, I began working through the stored quotes one theme at a time and organizing the quotes into an outline from which I could write. I wrote very brief linking sentences between main headings and eliminated multiple quotes, setting the strongest quotes at the beginning of each new heading.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The findings are reported in three parts. Using the context of time, each women's understanding of her future, past and present is described. First, the women describe their futures dreams, desires and designs for their lives. Second, the influences which have impacted them in the past, or are still presently affecting them, are detailed. Third, the women describe their present experience of being influenced by views on women's career and family roles in the midst of their career-decision-making process.

Part I - Future *Dreams, Desires & Designs*

In the interviews with the women involved in this study, the phrase, "I want..." was expressed repeatedly. The statements that followed began to take the form of a life dream, vision, or goal. It is these wants, dreams, and desires that fuel this entire project. It is these women's dreams that precipitate the discussion about their anticipated future. This project begins with a look into the hearts of these women - the place where they allow themselves to desire, to dream and to design their lives.

Although some of the women articulate a concise, thought-out dream for their lives, usually their "want" statements were randomly dispersed throughout the discussion. Their dreams were expressed in a variety of voices. Some painted pictures of their future in great depth and color. Others talked in detail about how their life will "work." Some spoke in a language of fear, naming what they want to avoid. As the women talked about their futures, their dreams and plans fell neatly into three categories. They all talked about wanting careers, wanting families and wanting to combine the two.

Career Plans/Roles

Knowing that these women were in the last year(s) of their university undergraduate programs, I assumed that they would be in the midst of some decision-making about their immediate career directions. I was interested in how they initially decided to pursue their career direction as well as how they are preparing for their future career plans.

Narrowing down a career direction has occurred for these women through a variety of processes. Nonetheless, they arrived at a decision by focusing on unique values and concerns. Some breezed into their career direction with little apparent effort, while others wrestled with their decisions. The bases of their choices include valuing convenience and flexibility, accommodating their family role and using their personal abilities. Each woman emphasized her desire to help people as a guiding value in making her career decision.

Career Decision

The participants in this study made their career decisions at different points in time and in different ways. Ashley has always known her career direction, having carried a care-giving career dream from childhood to the present. This contrasts with the women whose career choice was relatively unnegotiated until recently; Tara and Dani entered training for their careers with casual confidence, weighing the alternatives and the "pros and cons" of their decisions. Yet, Lori, Dani and Ashley all seek careers that will accommodate their family roles. Lori and Marie laboured over their career direction, striving for the perfect fit with other goals. Although neither worried about career decisions in high school, they are steeped in the issues now, both wanting a career that will make a difference in the world. For Lori and Marie, settling on a choice is based on matching their strengths to a profession. All of the women in the study talked about making a career decision based on their abilities to help people.

When I asked Ashley when she knew which career she would pursue, she explained that it was like a childhood dream which was never questioned in her adulthood.

> Well, I guess I always wanted to do this since I was little, and I never even thought... It never entered my mind that I wouldn't go to university when I was done high school. Why am I going to university? I guess I never really *thought* of it, it's something I've just done.

Tara explains her career choice in a similar way,

> I just kind of fell into it. I never really made a definite choice. Like I knew beyond high school I wanted to do something, but I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do....So I didn't really make a set decision.

Dani says she chose a career which would accommodate her family roles,

> That's probably had a big influence on the career that I chose 'cause with nursing, you know, there's that opportunity that you can take time off and you're not really going to lose anything, unlike other careers where you have to climb to the top of the ladder. With nursing it's not really like that... Also, with nursing there's the opportunity. There's lots of part-time jobs and stuff like that, so you can be with the kids after school.

Lori also talks about searching for a career which accommodates her family roles. "I guess that is why I am looking for a career in a field that would kind of align with what I would be doing for the rest of my life."

Marie recalled the ambivalence about her career that she experienced earlier in her life. "I never thought about my career. I never really thought about my career.. I don't know why not!...Jeepers."

In retrospect, Lori says she never realized there would be a process of career-decision-making. She describes her experience since high school of feeling aimless and indecisive.

> Like in high school, I always thought I could do it - could do this, or could do that, could be anything. But I never thought of the process or whether I really should do it. I knew I would be something. I just didn't know what!
>
> I was so lost. Actually, the only reason I went into psychology was I asked my friend who was applying to university, and I had no idea what to major in, and I just asked her and she had taken a psychology course in high school. I guess I've avoided making a decision and have allowed other people to make the decisions for me.

Throughout her time in university, Lori managed to narrow down a career direction, although it has been difficult. "I took so many different courses [that] I saw the broad scope of possibilities. So it made me a bit more aware of what I could do." She looks for something to match with her strengths.

> In my last year or so, I've begun to seriously think about what I am going to do after I am done. So then I thought, well why not look for a career that focuses on something that is a strong point for me. So that's why I'm kind of looking at social work.
>
> Before, I was looking and saying, "oh, that looks really good and that looks really good and I finally had to look inward and say what is good for me," and then evaluate them all. It's just a matter of finding out what my strong points are and trying to match them with a career.

A Helping Orientation

All of the women in this study talked about how their desire to help people factored into their career choices. What attracted Dani to choose nursing as a career was "just helping people...being involved with people... knowing that you can make a difference in people's lives." This theme, of engaging in meaningful human contact in order to make a difference, emerges in the other interviews as well.

For Ashley, the enjoyment of caring for others as opposed to monetary gain motivates her career choice.

> I remember when I went into my profession, like I never went into it for money. It is something I'm doing because I want to enjoy it, and that's what I've always wanted.
>
> I don't see myself doing any administrative type stuff. More of the care giver role is probably [what] I would like to pursue.

In explaining her career choice, Lori identifies the realization of her strengths in helping people. "The thing about myself is that I really like to be around people, and I really like to help people if I can, and I like to listen to people."

Marie explains how she hopes to use her Occupational Therapy training to help people both physically and emotionally.

> I decided I wanted to help people, and I could probably do [that] with this degree. Like OT does look really neat to me because it's holistic, you know. It still has this thing that I want, where it's not just physical helping it's the heart stuff. I really like the philosophy that way, you know, to help people to do what they want to do.

Motivated by her world view, Marie articulates a highly developed dream, unlike the other women interviewed, of helping people on a global scale.

> I guess the big thing is, well I mean the fact that I want to help people keeps coming up. Like I feel like that's what is like... **totally it**, you know. That's what makes me feel good about myself, and that's what's going to make me happy. I just want to do something that's good.
>
> And I have to do something that's going to contribute something to people that have less than I have, because I want to try to even things out in the whole big picture of the world and work towards justice and equity.
>
> I also want to work towards peace, and, you know, peace in the sense of love, not just like absence of war. Peace, meaning something real, that makes people feel OK inside, like dignity and stuff.
>
> I would like, I mean it's all got to come back to God, right. Like I mean, I really want God to be honoured. I want to do whatever I can to help people to be able to kind of access God, because there's so much there. So that might end up being a big focus of my life too.

These women clearly express a certainty about the value of helping people beyond their family and social networks. It is something which they are pursuing in a deeply personal yet professional and passionate manner.

Family Plans/Roles

Relationships encompassed a large part of the discussion of these women's futures. Although presently some of the women are single, some are in relationships, and one is married, they each picture themselves in marriage relationships in their ideal future. In the interviews, the women talked about themselves as wives, described an ideal marriage relationship and communicated their concept of egalitarian roles.

Marriage Description

Role As Wife.

Initially, Ashley found it difficult to describe herself as a "wife." She and Lori almost automatically equate this title with the traditional housewife role. Once the discussion continued, however, the women articulated a clear picture of the kind of relationship they want in their future. The qualities characterizing their desired relationship include being a friend, supporting one another, enjoying time together, and having openness, honesty, and equal caring.

Ashley initially describes her role as wife based on a traditional stereotype, yet later she refers to her relationship with her partner as a team. When I asked how she saw herself being a wife she gave the following response.

> Oh boy, this is tough. I guess kind of the traditional wife roles of cleaning and laundry and cooking. We've talked about that, and he's definitely not like "you're going to do that all the time." But also just being a support to him and being more of a team type thing. Doing whatever we can basically together.

When Lori described her role as a wife, she also made reference to the traditional stereotype of housekeeper, although she seemed to force the words out. "I always see myself as being a wife and...that includes being a friend. You know, everything...being a (I don't want to say it) a *housekeeper*... It includes... all those things that go along with being a wife..."

When talking about her role as a wife, Tara agrees with Ashley's earlier comments about the role of a wife, "I think the role of wife has changed a lot over the years. I think it's more of a relationship. I see relationships more as an equal give and take."

Marriage Ideals.

Tara talks about the prerequisite to a lasting relationship - personal stability.

> I think you have to establish who you are and be comfortable with yourself before you can really establish a relationship with someone else and share yourself with someone else. If you're not stable yourself, then a relationship will never work no matter who it is or whether it is the perfect person. It will never work.

Spending time together daily in a marriage relationship is something which Tara and Dani note. Tara points out that by caring for children together "you are also spending time with each other, and you are growing together as people by being parents." Dani discusses the importance to her of nurturing the marriage relationship through time together.

> I think it is also important to have time together. I think I would put that before working full time. Like I think that not only does the child need to have time with the parents, but the marital partnership - you know, you need time with that also. I wouldn't want it to be so that you never see the person, because, you know, that's not a marriage.

The ideal relationship for Dani would be one which is open, honest, and in which both partners care equally for each other.

> I kind of see the relationship I would love to have as an open and honest relationship where you care deeply about the other person. You want to spend the rest of your life with that person - just the equal taking care of each other.

Lori tells her story of marriage and of how she has come to see that marriage could happen in her life and could turn out to be an equitable and enjoyable experience. Knowing her husband will support her gives her confidence to make a career decision.

> In high school I was convinced that I was never going to get married, so when I did it was a complete surprise to me. Actually, being married has been good for me because I have come to realize that men aren't all out to overpower women - that there are men who want to be equals and that's, I guess, the role I see myself playing in our marriage is an equal partner - not subservience or anything like that.
>
> Actually, my husband is one of my primary supports. It has turned out to be a very positive experience for me. I've become much more self confident, and so that has helped in part with my trying to pick a career without being so... knowing that he's going to support me and it makes me feel better about myself. And I'm capable of doing things. Yah, it's been good for me.

Egalitarian Roles.

The theme of wanting a marriage relationship characterized by equality was common to all the women interviewed, yet expressed in individual ways. The women repeatedly use the word "equal" as an adjective to describe their desired marriage relationship. Ashley and Lori used the phrase "equal partners" to describe how they wanted their anticipated marriage relationships to function. Tara talked about equal roles for couples based on the roles her mother fulfilled as a single parent. Both Dani and Tara specified that they do not want to be dominated, but they desire to be heard as equal contributors to their relationships. Dani spoke about her experience in a prior relationship when she determined her expectation to have an equal say and a voice in her family relationships - ideally 50/50.

Ashley describes her future marriage as a partnership where she would experience "just being a partner in the pursuits of life and interests." Similarly, Lori says "that's I guess the role I see myself playing in our marriage is an equal partner."

Tara credits her mother's dual role - performing both nurturing and authoritative functions - in the home as the main reason she values equal marriage relationships.

> I think that the mother and father should be equal. What I saw and liked in my mother is also what I hope to see in a father. I think that they should be so equal that what you want in your mother is what you also want in your father.
>
> I think I really don't believe that males should be this and females should be this. I don't believe in those gender roles - you are what you are - you do what's necessary to make it - You do... you do what feels right for you.

Discussing a prior dating relationship, Dani describes the feeling of being treated as a possession.

> Right, my own independence. The fellow I was going out with was very much, "OK, this is what we are going to do." You were kind of a possession and I just hated that feeling.

Realizing her desire for personal independence, she states that equality in her relationships must be reflected in her ability to speak and to be heard - to have a voice in her relationships.

> Something I have come to realize is that I want to be able to live a life that I want and have a say in what goes on. Not once you get married, OK, whatever what the husband says goes. I want it to be an equal say... I do have a voice in this relationship and in this family. I would love it to be 50/50.

Similarly, Tara does not want to be dominated in a relationship, rather she desires to be free to make her own decisions.

> There is no dominant, well, "you make the decisions and I'll just go along with it." I don't think that should be the case. That's not the type of relationships I want. I want a very equal [relationship]. We all put in equal, and we all benefit from it.

Sharing Responsibilities

Talking more in-depth about how the responsibilities will be shared in the egalitarian relationship, it became evident that the women's dreams about sharing responsibilities in the home are contingent on finding a man who is willing to participate. Tara presents a clear and logically defended rationale for the equal sharing of household and child care duties. Taking a more traditional approach, Ashley and Dani are content to assume the role of caregiver in the home. Yet, they hope to find husbands who will be willing to help so that a flexible sharing of the home roles may facilitate their career aspirations. The fear of not finding a responsible husband is what concerns Marie.

Speaking to the problem of women being overworked, Tara outlines her views on roles in the home. She wants the household duties equally divided down the line: housework, cooking and finances.

> You know what is happening a lot now, where the wife goes to work, earns her pay, he earns his pay then she comes home and does all the housework for him - I don't see that at all.
>
> I see it as a very [equally] divided support type relationship. You know, take turns making dinner, share all the housework, the bills.
>
> I think it's not my money/your money. It's **our** money. So whatever money it is, regardless of who makes more, everyone still puts in their time at work. Money is all kind of community property between the two.

Tara also discusses the sharing of child care.

> In terms of children, like sure the woman has to have the children, but it doesn't necessarily mean that I have to be the one to get up every night in the middle of the night when the baby is still really young. Like there's no reason why he can't go and get the baby and bring the baby to me. You know, and I don't really have to wake up then to feed right? And there's no reason why he can't change a diaper, pick the baby up, cuddle the baby, settle her down or him down or whatever.
>
> There's no reason why that can't be, and I don't think, you know, the woman should be the one to make all the sacrifices.

Tara clearly outlines her rationale for the equal sharing of child care. She emphasizes that "there is no [rational] reason" that a man cannot perform the various duties required. Reasoning that women customarily make the sacrifices in order to meet the needs of the child is not acceptable for Tara. She clearly sees a child as equally a "product" of both the male and the female. She ends her thoughtful explanation with the point that, for men and women alike, choosing to have children requires time and effort in order to raise them properly.

Expressing more willingness to take on traditional roles in their relationships, Ashley and Dani still describe their roles as undefined. When I asked Ashley how she anticipated housework to fit into their - her and her partner's - roles, she summarized her expected role as traditional, with an openness to "give and take."

> We both do think of more traditional roles - the husband goes out and gets the money and the wife stays home and does the cleaning or whatever. I kind of expect to do more of the household kind of work. He sees it as... if I'm at work all day and he's home, (if I have to work weekends and he's home) he'll make the dinners and stuff like that.
>
> It will be kind of give and take, and I just think that all kind of fits in. I don't think we have really, *really* defined roles like, this will always be your role. I think they will work back and forth, kind of.

Vacillating between her ideals and what she believes about reality, Dani explains how she sees the role sharing working out. Her bottom line is she wants one parent home with her children.

> I would love it to be 50/50. But, in a way it's not really reality.
>
> Like it would be totally fine with me if I stayed home with the kids and he worked or even, if he was not working, if he stayed home with the children. I would see that as fine too. What I see as important is just that one parent is there with the kids. So if that could be, I would love that to be.
>
> I kind of see it as impossible to have a true 50/50, because one person's working. I think just for one person to be active in the care of the children, you know, when he is home.

Dani sees herself as central to the family's functioning, yet she hopes her husband will see it as his responsibility as well, equally willing to give and take.

> I guess I always pictured myself as the one who is home raising the children, and making things work out or whatever, but I think that it is kind of this other person's responsibility too. So, you know I wouldn't want him working 18 hours a day or whatever. I think that it's a give and take kind of thing...

Hoping For A Willing Partner.

Just as these women are searching for a career direction, they are also searching for companions and potential fathers to their children. They have high hopes of finding the right man. The women have specific ideas about how they want their partner to be involved with the household responsibilities. Lori and Dani compare their potential partners to their own father's role. The main thing the women are looking for in a partner is an attitude of willingness - an earnest desire to be involved.

Lori has already made a marriage decision, and she reflects on what she was looking for in terms of a man's attitude about role sharing.

> I think I probably looked for someone who is ...as Freudian as it sounds...is a lot like my father... you know, because my Dad took an active role in raising us kids and stuff, and that definitely became an important consideration in who I married. I think just a willingness to be available for whatever needs to be done, even like including the housework and child care and all that. Just for him to be willing to do it. Yah, to want to!

Regarding child care roles in the family, Lori admires her husband's willingness to participate.

> Yah, actually my husband and I have talked about this and he's quite willing to actually participate - he's a carpenter so at times he may not be working a lot. Actually, he looks forward to taking an active part. I am very thankful that I married someone who is that understanding and willing to do that.

Dani describes her ideal father role - a man involved because he wants to be.

> I would want the father to be very active. A father with the children. I mean my father was there for us - he coached our ball teams, but in the actual care of us, you know, that was women's work.

> I kind of see parenting as a 50/50 split. So, I see my spouse, I would want definitely to help take care of the children, not just playing with them, but bathing them, feeding them, changing their diapers, you know, being in there and... actually wanting to be with the children.

In discussing the sharing of the child care role, Ashley offered that her partner indicates an interest in being involved.

> I guess actually he sees it as, like he wants to be home as much as he can with the kids. He wants to spend a lot of time with them, and so do I. So as far as the role of parenting, depending on who's working and when we are working and stuff, will probably differ.

Tara relates her perspective on the appropriate involvement of a father in child care.

> I think I want to see someone who's really involved with the kids. Not standoffish. I know a lot of men tend to be standoffish [with] babies. But even then I think the father should be involved because that's a really important bonding period with both parents.
>
> Like I have friends [whose] boyfriends won't pick up the babies when they are crying or whatever. And that's ridiculous. Like there's no reason why the mother should only go through that stress. Like, "oh, the kid's crying, it's your turn," you know. Or, "he needs to be changed, it's you turn." I think I see it really equal and I see it really nurturing and caring in terms of both parents really involved, too.

Again, she hopes to find someone who *wants* to be involved.

> But hopefully I will end up with someone who wants to... you know, is enthused about it and wants to get involved and doesn't want to be a bystander, because I think you miss a lot of the joys if you are standoffish, you know.

Combining Career And Family Roles

In the course of the discussion about how they have been influenced by various views on women's career and family roles in the midst of their career-decision-making process, each woman talked about balance. With a smorgasbord of dreams, desires and designs on the table, the women expressed plans to combine their career and family roles in order to achieve their goals and enjoy their dreams. There is an intricate interweaving of career plans with family plans required to maintain the balance they desire.

Prioritizing Roles

When asked to list and prioritize their anticipated roles for the future, they give the following responses:

Ashley:

> I guess the thing that I'll want to give the most time and attention to would be wife and mother, first of all. My career role definitely would be up there, although some church stuff [is] even more than that. I think my immediate family and my roles in that would probably be the most important to me.

> Dani:
>
> Probably my desire to be a wife and mother would probably be the strongest. After that, being a good nurse, being successful in my career, but I think I would probably [put] family over that.
>
> Marie:
>
> I really want to have this great career...and I really want to have a perfect family. And I think that's going to be really hard ...I just don't know which is most important.
>
> Tara:
>
> I definitely see myself as a wife, as a mother. I don't plan on being a single career person. Family is important but it is kind of secondary to career for me right now particularly, since I'm not in a relationship.
>
> Lori:
>
> OK, I think probably my most important would be mother, second most important as a wife and third most important would be my job.

For Ashley, Dani and Lori, the family role is identified as more important than their career roles. Ashley and Dani name the wife role before the mother role. Lori specifically places her role as mother before that of wife. Tara acknowledges that in her present situation she places higher priority on her career role. Marie simply cannot put one above the other, desperately desiring both.

Sequencing

In these women's visions of the future there is an apparent flow or interweaving of priorities. A complex matrix is employed involving the timing and prioritizing of their different pursuits. Sequencing is a term which describes how and when these women decide to pursue their roles.

The most obvious sequencing theme for these women is their decision to pursue career first and family later. They are all in university, indicating their priority's of pursuing training for careers. Other sequencing issues include when to have children, when to work full time, when to work part time, and when to be at home full time with the children. These sequencing decisions are usually based on values each woman holds about her children, her career, her husband's career (most often he is considered the primary breadwinner), the biological clock, social pressures, work place accommodation, husband accommodation, day care, and finances.

Lori, Dani and Ashley clearly want to be at home before their children are in school in addition to keeping up their professional skills. However, they wonder how finances and their partner's role will figure into the equation. They question the realism of their dream to combine career and family. They would deeply regret losing the investment they have put into being trained for their professions. Tara talks about keeping her options open, such as using a nanny, in order to keep employable. She could not tolerate her partner putting pressure on her to stay home against her will.

Placing career training before children is a way of getting prepared before the full time requirements of childrearing are upon them. Dani said, "I have all my life to do nursing. But, you only have a certain amount of time to have kids."

Lori expresses certainty about wanting to be home with her children when they are young.

> Right, I'd ideally be looking for a non full-time position - a part time job or working out of the home so I could be there for a lot of the time. Probably I'll be the main person at home... Probably until [the kids are] five, going to school. I actually look forward to [being at home].

Ashley, who also wants to be home with children, says she and her partner have discussed how financial issues and how role issues may work out over the course of their lives.

> We've talked about when we would kind of like to start a family. We definitely want to be married for two years before, just to get used to each other, and so that I can work and stuff.
>
> But he wants me home, too, when we have kids so in that sense it's good because it's not a struggle for me thinking he wants me at work but I want to be at home. I would like to say until they are in school that's what I would like, but whether that's [financially] possible or not, I don't know.

Tara cannot see herself staying home until the children are in school for financial and personal reasons.

> I guess it really depends a lot on the economic factor. I guess I wouldn't mind taking a year off of work but I can't see myself taking six years completely off work till they go to school. I can't see that happening.

Ashley hopes she will work out a way to make her career last through the years of childrearing. She would regret losing the skills she has developed.

> I don't want to give it up like, when you've gone to school for that long you don't want to give it up totally. You have to keep a certain number of hours. So who knows... when I'd work and stuff. I'd have to work it out somehow I guess. I see it more as a lasting thing, probably more than my Mom thought [her career] was going to carry on.

Dani also wants to keep up her career throughout the child care years so that she is skilled enough to go back to work. She is not willing to give up the investment she has put into her training.

> I've realized that once I have this career, I have worked so hard for this,...I want to use it. I want to have kids and I would prefer to definitely stay home a few years with the children and raise them, but I think that once they are in school I would go back to a career even if it was just part-time.

Tara talks about keeping her options open as well.

> I think, you know, he'd probably keep a full time job and initially I might not have a full time job. But I would go back to that if I want to and have that option open.

Tara emphasizes her desire to make the choices about sequencing her career without feeling pressured by her partner. Again she refers to the children as "equal products" whose care is both parents' equal responsibility.

> I don't think anyone has the right to say to someone else, "well since you had children" - but it's really the **we** that had children - "well you have to take three years off to take care of this little one."

For Tara, the option of having a nanny for her children is viable.

> You might want to be there for the first step and this and that and the other thing, but there's a lot of nannies that are just as good. It would be nice to have [a nanny], especially if you are going to have two kids close together. You might end up taking off two years in a row. But, you know, two years out of 60 or 70 years... what's two years? Two years is nothing.

In the end, it seems Tara would be willing either to take a few years off her career or have a nanny involved.

The Combining Dream

The three quotes below are representative of the women who talk about the dream of combining career and family. These quotes illustrate the variety of dreams, ideals and goals by which these women live.

When I asked Ashley how she prepares for an unknown future, she expressed that knowing her goals and desires is a source of strength for her.

> My perspective is more like I want a career to start out or whatever, but my goal is hopefully to get married and have kids. And when I have kids I don't particularly want to be working...I think one thing is just knowing what my goals and desires are....is in one sense knowing...that's one thing that I'm working towards - a goal of hopefully not having to work when my kids are really young.

Lori struggled to express her ideal dream.

> The ideal situation of the way I see it...I guess it would just be to have... a close knit family unit with me and my husband involved in raising the children and then having a job that I found fulfilling that I enjoy. That even if I work full-time, if my job was something that I really felt that I believed in, then I think I could make it work....that is the way I would like it to be.

Dani articulated the ephemeral nature of her dreams.

> One of the big things would be if I had children. I would want to stay home with the kids, and, I guess if circumstances didn't allow that and I had to go to work and stuff, I would probably feel a bit guilty about it. But, I think that I would have to just say to myself well, you know, look at the situation...So I think that although that's one of the dreams, you know, you can't always have your dream or whatever, so you have to make modifications to it.

The women's dreams are held closely and provide a sense of hope for their futures. Although they recognize the future is unknown, dreaming helps them set goals, keep motivated and anticipate the future.

Part II - Past And Present *Influences*

Talking about how the women anticipate their futures inevitably exposed the sources of influence which the women believe have impacted them. The women talked about influences which have affected them in the past as well as influences which continue to influence them in the present.

All of the women I interviewed referred to three main sources of influence. They all mentioned their mothers as key sources of influence regarding their future career and family roles. They also agreed on the influence of their families; their parents all encouraged their career achievements and several family relationships and experiences reinforced their achievement goals. Another source of influence they agreed on was society; they reacted to the views which differed from their own and identified conflicting messages in the media, aimed at women.

Ashley sums up the dual influence of family and society when she said she was influenced "probably, on two different sides - like maybe from Mom's perspective - she's kind of stressed that, you know a job is important, careers are important, but the most important thing is your family. But, I think that's different from society saying that work's important, power and success and kind of furthering yourself at anybody's cost kind of thing." Although Ashley may not totally represent the other women regarding the duality of the mother/society influences on these women, these two influences certainly constituted a substantial portion of the discussion around how the women were influenced in regard to women's career and family roles.

Mother Influence

These women's mothers influenced their daughters firstly, through their choice of careers and through modeling their career roles. Their decisions and various career paths had both positive and negative effects on their daughters. Secondly, their mothers' behaviour within the family, modeling what it is to be a woman in the family had a profound effect on these women. These are examples which they may choose to follow or avoid. Finally, their mothers' examples as self-sacrificial or assertive leaders as mothers and parents creates a deeply emotional reaction from the women as they anticipate their own roles as mothers.

Model Of Career

All the women interviewed told me about their mothers' career experiences. Dani's and Tara's mothers modeled combining career and family roles. Dani's mother combined day care work with care of her own children, later moving to a career outside the home. Tara's mother modeled achievement and hard work in the midst of a difficult situation, her husband's death.

Two of the women's mothers quit their professions once they had children. Ashley agrees with her mother's decision while Marie expresses a different sentiment. Among the women whose mothers worked, Lori, who learned the value of careers and family at an early age, sees her mother's career advancement limited by her family responsibilities.

Dani recognizes that her mother's career path influences her own views on career. Her mother modeled both family and work roles.

> Mom stayed home and raised us kids, and she kind of ran a day care and raised other people's kids. So, to me it wasn't a big deal, because Mom was at home with us and Mom was working too... we saw both sides of it. I think my Mom played a big influence, because once we were out of school she went back to work, so she wasn't at home any more.

Tara emphasizes that her mother's example has been the most significant influence in her life. When I asked Tara if she could think of any other influences in her life, she was not able to name any other than her Mom.

> Mom! Mom's really great because she went on her own, did her own thing and is a very strong person for it. If you would have looked at her so many years ago, society probably would have said well, you know, "you don't have a chance." She went against all the odds having three kids to support, going from a minimum wage job and only a high school education through university to where she is now. That's definitely something to be admired.

Tara admires her mother's inner strength in the midst of hardship.

> What kind of people have the drive and the motivation to do [what she did]? You know, there's a lot of people that would have said, "woe is me and I have three children, I'm never going to make it and I'm never going to be anything because I have all of these restrictions holding me back and all these things preventing me from, you know, reaching the top."

> So I think that is a major thing to be admired. You know, she was on her own for fifteen years, she made it up to a managerial type position, and she has a lot to show for what she did.

By her achievements and by overcoming barriers, Tara's mother models a positive, survivor's attitude which, in turn, Tara models herself after.

> My mom is in a professional type position, well, over the years she made her way up, by the time I was fifteen she was in a managerial type role. So I guess I used her as a role model and, you know - "the sky's the limit."

Ashley talks about her mother's decision to quit her career once she had children. "She went into [her career] right out of high school too, but when she and Dad got married, she quit, you know... I mean after she had kids. So she only worked for a couple years and she never went back to it." Seeing the effect on her mother of her father's incessant work schedule, Ashley agrees with her mom's view that careers can be detrimental to family life. Ashley plans, instead, to focus on her family role.

> I kind of agree with her in the sense that I know how it's been hard when he's not home. I think I am quite similar to her in thinking that careers are good and can be enjoyable, but I'd rather put more effort into family and relatives and stuff like that.

Marie tells her mother's story, which is partly informed through her grandmother, in great detail. She believes that her mother did not prepare herself for her medical career and this resulted in her having to give up the profession.

> My grandmother told me that she thought my mother would be this big career woman and would never marry. But, I think my Mom went into Med. school without thinking about that stuff. She just went in cold... blind, because she got this big scholarship and she just went.
>
> She went through Med. school, graduated, went to this little tiny town to practice, and I don't know what the heck happened but she married this man who happens to be my father. She gave up her career for us. My Dad wouldn't give up his job.

The influence of her mother's decision has resulted in Marie's deep sense of self blame.

> Even though she never said it was a real hardship, she would spend so much time always telling me that [what she did] was for us. I felt it was like a sentence that she put up with and it was my fault, you know? I think she gave up her life with us. She quit skiing when we were born, she quit doing everything, you know? I guess I always took it on myself that she quit her career.

Lori's mother, a skilled nurse, is an inspiration for her to choose a career in which she can be competent and respected.

> Some people look down upon nurses as being... I don't know... doctor's slaves kind of idea. But, I think my mom is a very intelligent woman and she is very capable almost to the point of being...well...as capable as the doctors are and so they respect her a lot - they give her a lot of respect.
>
> I've always thought that would be the kind of career choice I would like to make. Some place where you get the same respect and she's very knowledgeable and she stays up to date and stuff in her field.

From an early age, Lori learned the importance of combining both family and career roles. "When I was five, pretty much all the women I knew in my life - my mother and my grandmother, were working. I never had the idea that the home was all there was to it - it was an important part but not everything." She recalls an early memory of fearing having to juggle career and family responsibilities when she grew up.

> At ten, I think I resisted growing up - actually on my birthday I told every one that I didn't want to get any older...I prefer to stay young, not just to stay young, but because I didn't want to become a grown up woman. [I wanted] to avoid the realities of what they have to face. The whole thing of juggling work and family and trying to be happy with all of it, you know, it's really hard... I just wanted to avoid the whole thing of being a grown up female.

Lori also observes that her mother's choices about career were restricted by family expectations and responsibilities and Lori anticipates this burden of responsibility for herself as well.

> When she was in high school everyone told her that she was so smart she should become a doctor. But, because of finances she took nursing, because it was free. And so I think ever since then she hasn't been disappointed or really felt stuck but she has always looked to do something better or different.
>
> Right now she is finishing up a degree in nursing through correspondence. I think I see her as - and maybe that's where I get my idea of once you have a family you have responsibilities that restrict your choices. Like she couldn't just pick up and go to school for two years straight - she had to take it in five years through correspondence. So that's probably where I get that idea.

Summary These women are all influenced by their mother's career paths. Dani and Ashley each admire their mother's ability to combine both career and family roles. Tara takes special courage from her mother's success. Ashley, seeing her mother's choices, agrees that family is a high priority for her life. Marie sees her mother's career experience, and she struggles trying to reconcile the two roles. Lori admires her mother's career competence, values both career and family and wonders if she will be able to avoid the struggle of compromising career achievement when family responsibilities are present.

Model Of Gender Behaviour

Although all of the mothers mentioned in this study trained for careers and combined career and family roles to some extent, two of the mothers exemplified more traditional female roles of giving to the family, and two of the mothers assumed more authority roles in the family. Marie describes her mother as a woman who was a model of self-deprivation. The social message Marie perceived her mother as living was that your own needs are unimportant and you should give everything away to others. Ashley refers to a similar attitude of self-sacrifice and giving which she observes in her hard-working mother. Similarly, Lori, whose grandmother was the family matriarch, views women's roles in the family as strong and central. Tara, whose mother provided both authoritative and nurturing functions, sees her mother as both a strong leader and caring parent.

Marie's mother modeled self-deprivation. Marie describes her mother's practice of saving things until they were worn out and her practice of delayed gratification.

> When I was growing up my Mom wore hardly any makeup at all, like lipstick and that was it. I don't know if that has to do with women's roles, but I think it does. She really kind of deprived herself of a lot of flowery or kind of like extra nice things. Like we didn't have pictures on our walls and stuff like that.
>
> I think when my mom decided to go to Med. school she really got good at this self-deprivation thing, you know, and just delayed gratification forever. Like she had these green towels, and she hated green. She got them at her wedding and we used those forever until they were scrunched up, you know, and she was just, like wearing them out, you know, and they were worn out ! Like it was time to throw them out! And I am like that, like I will never throw anything out. Never, until it is dead.

When I asked Marie what message this communicated to her about women's roles, she spoke in the following strong words,

> Well, [it's] something like, *you are not important - like your own comfort like so long as you can survive and you are expected to give everything else to everyone else* . Holy cow I never have figured that out before but yah, that's true - boy!

Ashley also describes her mother's role in her family as self-sacrificial. She describes her mother's top priority as consistently giving of herself to her children.

> I've definitely been influenced by my own family, by my own mother. Just her priorities are, you know, family and wife and all that entails. I think I'm influenced knowing how she sacrificed so much as a mother for us - you know, to take us places and get us involved in activities, feeding us, clothing us.
>
> I think she gave up her own time. Her inde - not her independence, what is the right word? She gave up a lot of what she could have done and enjoyed for herself to let us enjoy or grow up with probably more opportunities than we would of if she had just - "oh you guys go do whatever, and I'll go read for a while," or whatever. So, I think I've definitely been influenced by that.

Expecting to model herself after her mother's role, Ashley explains specifically how she has been influenced,

> I think I've tended to think of the mother as cleaning the house and stuff like that. It is something I always saw her doing all the time and keeping up on and so I kind of thought, well it's my role too, like I have to learn that and that's what I'll be doing.

When asked how she wants her role to be the same or different than her mother's, Ashley says she expects to be quite the same. "Mostly, mostly. There are some things that I'm just, like - I'm not going to be like that, as far as for example being so thorough." She also relates the following thoughts about her mother's example.

> I think she goes really ambitious but then again I admire her for her involvement in our lives. She's a very giving person and she takes time out for people. That's something that I want to be able to do. I guess in that sense she sacrificed her time to do that and to an extent I think that is important for me to do too.

Lori describes her grandmother's model as the family leader. Lori's views on women's roles in the family have been influenced by the matriarchal example of having a strong woman central to her family's functioning.

> My grandma's probably a good example. My grandpa died a long time ago, before I was born, and my grandma has always been the leader of the family. The one who kept everybody together. I've thought about this and I see women as being the strong ones who hold everything together and men are kind of peripheral, which I don't know if that's a healthy attitude.

When she was a child, Lori's female relatives told her that being a woman was hard and she says she believed them, "I think I just recognized, yah, it's hard work and it made me respect them ... all the more for what they were doing and appreciate what they were doing more."

Tara sees her mother's approach to women's behaviour as gender neutral, simply because she had to provide both authoritative and nurturing functions in her home. Tara explains how she views the situation in her home.

> Gender roles I think are a bunch of hogwash. People say, you know, that man should be the aggressor, and the controller and all that. Well, then if you look at it from that perspective, then my mom was supposed to be the pacifist. Well, who was supposed to control her then, who was supposed to show her the way?! Well, she had to be dominant because she was the only one, so she had to be the controller.
>
> But she had two sides. She had the controller and the authoritative type figure but she was also the caring, nurturing type person as well.

Summary The women in this study are personally influenced by their mother's role in the family in various ways. Although Marie desires to seek a professional career she fears she will deprive herself and expect herself to give too much to others, similar to her mother. Ashley expects to work hard, like her mother did, but to take opportunities to enjoy herself. Lori respects her female relatives, including her mother, for their example of leadership and hard work and for keeping the family together. Tara has learned from her mother's gender neutral approach to parenting that she does not have to conform to a traditional standard of female gender behaviour in the family.

Model Of Parenting

Three of the women perceived that their mother's provided a positive model of parenting. Ashley expresses her admiration for her mother's caring involvement in her family's lives.

> She really cares what we do. I definitely appreciate [it]. She took us and watched every soccer game we played and every basketball game and took us on field trips

> with school and stuff because she wanted to be involved in our lives, and I think that is definitely important. I'll try to model that.
>
> Definitely over the years we've become more [like] friends than Mom and daughter. So that's something that I would hope anyway in my relationships with kids.

Dani identifies her mother as a central role model for her parenting style.

> I look at how my Mom raised us and if I could be that good that would be wonderful. I guess being there for the kids is probably what I see as most important - being there watching them grow up. You are there when they need you, which has influenced why I want to stay home and stuff for them...just having a positive relationship with them.

Tara's mother's parenting was in conjunction with Tara's nanny, Momma.

> Well, like I said before, my mom didn't really raise me. She was there, she kind of orchestrated what she wanted us to do. She kind of steered us towards what activities and stuff we should be involved in. But she also allowed us to make choices... but she didn't take on all the mother roles. She did to some extent but not fully.
>
> Momma took on a lot more of the day to day type things with us, you know, the day to day discipline, the making up lunch, you know, making sure we made it off to this or that.

Talking about the negative influence of her mother, Marie explains how she was put in difficult situations as a child.

> We were friends, but she did that with my brother too. We would ally against my Dad. I was the "girl." I was the one she related to "that way" - like a friend. Like a girlfriend, to talk about relationships and stuff. Yah, she was a mother to me...but I was a mother to her too.

Marie explains her desire to avoid hurting her children the way her mother hurt her.

> I am trying really hard to make sure that however I end up myself is going to be good for my kids. I don't know how I ended up like that. I just know that my Mom did all this great stuff and she wasn't happy in the end and then she'd take it out on me, sometimes.

Marie tells about her career direction beginning to take place in reaction to her mother's neglect of Marie's emotional needs.

> What really was behind that was the fact that I went into Psych. in the first place. Like from an early age, somewhere along the way I decided, OK, my Mom is really good at taking care of my physical needs, nutrition, and all this medical kind of stuff. But, she never really... I guess I just decided that when I grow up I'm going to take care of the other side of life.

I asked Marie if she was talking about emotional needs and she added, "Yah, and I think that's because my Mom sort of didn't really... wasn't really there for me and stuff. Anyway... oh well, it's kind of true, I guess it really is..."

Summary The women described various influences they have experienced in reaction to their mother's parenting styles. Tara, Ashley and Dani aim to follow in their mother's footsteps. Ashley and Dani plan to be stay-at-home moms, building positive relationships with their children, and Tara plans to be a career mom, possibly using a nanny. Marie responds to the emotional neglect she experienced by determining to meet those needs for her own children and for other people through her profession.

Family Influence

The women described being influenced by their family relationships messages. Parental expectations to achieve, as well as other family relationships and experiences, influence these women to place high priority on personal achievement and self-sufficiency.

Parent Expectations

Not only do these women's mothers have a significant impact on the way they perceive women's roles, each woman specifically mentions their parents together influencing them to pursue achievement, education, and careers. Ashley and Lori say they sensed their parents' expectation to go to university and pursue a career, although there was no overt pressure. Dani and Tara discussed their plans with their parents, openly hearing the advice their parents gave. Marie's grandmother and mother sent strong messages about their expectations for Marie to achieve her career goals. Overall, each parent wished for their daughter to be financially independent and to believe that she could pursue her goals and dreams.

Ashley's parents' expectations are for her to go to university and to be able to support herself.

> I think my parents would have had something to say if I wouldn't have wanted to go to university. Because in this day and age you never know who can support you. You need to be able to support yourself. And so...I think it probably has been something just expected maybe more than anything else.

Dani's parents supported her career achievements, and they encouraged her to combine career and family goals.

> Our parents really wanted us to go out and get a career and that kind of thing. So I think that has been a big influence. My grandparents and my parents - they really strongly emphasize, get a career first, you know, and then everything, family and that after.
>
> Probably the big thing is independence and financial security. They see the world today and you never know when there is a divorce or if your husband were to die, and they want us to have something to fall back on.
>
> My parents pretty much, you know like,[said] the sky's the limit - you go and do what you want to do. Go after your goals and don't stop short of it kind of thing - do the best that you can.

Tara's mother supports her career achievements. Tara says she knew she would go to university to pursue a helping career since grade nine. She does not want to be in the same situation as her mother, who had to begin a career later in life. Before starting university, she discussed with her mother how she would support herself financially while studying.

> My mom wanted something to support me [financially] - more than 5 dollar an hour jobs - to help me make it through university. So I knew university was a goal, but I wasn't really sure within university what I wanted to do.

About her career choice, Tara explains her mother's expectations,

> I guess I really didn't aggressively make a decision because I had thought well, you know, my mom had kind of planted the idea in my head that, I would be good in one of those helping type professions.

Lori's parents focus on achievements for their daughters. Her parents work hard to help her know she has the opportunity to become whatever she wants.

> Both my mom and my dad actually have been extremely supportive of my sister and I - I think more so than with my brothers - encouraging us to achieve and to set goals for ourselves and to work to those goals.
>
> My parents always treated all of us as people first and male and female second. But I think coming from the era that they came from, that they grew up in, where men - it was pretty much the door was wide open [for] whatever you wanted to do and for women there [were] a few select fields. And my parents wanted to make

> sure that we knew that we had the opportunity to go on and be whatever we wanted to be. So they worked really hard to get my sister and I to think that way, and I think it worked... I think it worked.

Lori finds her parents' expectation to attend university motivated her more than her own decision.

> That's probably more the reason why I first came to university than my own personal motivation....It was almost an expectation that, you know...I went along with what they decided. I could have decided not to, but it was easier for me at the time rather than decide what to do.

Marie's grandmother's warning to not give up anything for a man had a significant impact on her along with her own mother's influence. Some days it seems her mother's and grandmother's admonitions are ever-present.

> My grandmother...she's ninety some...and lives on her own. She's been alone forever. She's very ornery. I know a lot more of what she doesn't want for me. She doesn't want me to give anything up for a man. That is a clear message I got from my grandmother and my mom and everybody else in the world, well no, just those two. They are everybody in the world some days.

Marie finds her grandmother's expectations to be nearly impossible to live up to.

> But what does she want from me? She wants me to do, like I want to do this traveling thing and she's supportive of that. She's painting these amazing pictures that I'll never maybe really live up to, you know? Like she just wants greatness from her kids, you know. Whatever that means, but she's not going to be satisfied with the basic happiness that people are satisfied with, you know...

Summary The women are influenced by parental expectations to pursue careers. Most identify a comfort with the support and encouragement they have received. Lori and Dani both feel that their parents believe they can achieve any goal or dream they desire. Lori says she needed her parents' guidance when they gave it, although she struggles to find a career goal which she truly believes in. Marie is somewhat overwhelmed by the pressure she senses, specifically from her grandmother.

Family Experiences

In addition to the influence of their parents, the women identified other family influences which encourage their achievement. Lori's matriarchal family instilled achievement values in her. Lori says she shares these values with her sister, who is also her "best friend." Marie's home life also reinforced her achievement orientation. Ashley's sister and aunts serve as positive models of career women, whereas Dani's sister serves as a "negative" example, motivating her to avoid that situation.

Lori describes her family as matriarchal, emphasizing vast opportunities for women.

> I've been thinking about this and I think my main source of ideas about women's careers is from my mom because in my family the women are... it's more of a matriarchal family. So, ever since I grew up it's always been instilled in all of us that you can be whatever you want to be - the world is open to you.

In Marie's home environment the message conveyed was to perform and nurture her achievement abilities.

> At that point, like, me playing piano was the most important thing in our family. It felt that way because whenever I was doing homework or playing piano or something like that everybody else had to be quiet, because I was working, you know.
>
> I've got this real superiority complex now, I think, about how important my work is - that the whole world should stop so that I can work undistracted.

Ashley identifies her sister and aunts as models of achievement. She sees how pursuing her career before family is different than the way the generation before her approached their careers.

> Well, my sister probably for one. I mean after doing that many years [in training] you don't really want to just work for three or four years and then give it up so... she's quite dedicated to that.
>
> I guess some of my aunts and stuff who have families actually but they've more pursued their careers after their families [were] older. I think it's kind of changing now. We're starting out with it in the beginning starting our careers rather than, you know, having families and then getting careers after.

Lori names her sister as a "best friend" and a supporter who reinforces her goals.

> My best friend is my sister. We share a lot of the same ideas, a lot of the same goals and motivators and stuff. So we discuss the options.
>
> For her I try to be very supportive. No matter what she decides, I'd be supportive and, she does the same for me... to a certain extent. The one week that I wanted to become a lawyer she just started laughing at me , "yah good luck," [Lori responds], "Thank you." Like we play against each other and test out ideas and I figure I have driven her crazy asking her what I would be good at... She's a big support.

In what Dani perceives as a negative situation, her sister's experience motivates Dani to pursue her career.

> My older sister is probably, like, she is in kind of what I see as a negative situation. I think that's probably a big influence because I don't want to be like she is. She is living with this other family and she basically raises this couple's three kids and they don't really treat her very well at all and that kind of thing.
>
> So I see that and I say, "OK, this isn't what I want. I want to have a job and have some money and that kind of thing... have a family of my own."
>
> Like, she never went to school. She graduated from high school and kind of worked at five dollar an hour jobs and she'd be broke and everything and so that kind of influenced me. I see what kind of role she is in right now and that has kind of influenced me a lot because I know that I need to have a career so I don't end up working for five dollars an hour kind of thing.

Societal Influence

Society is viewed by these women as a limiting force, restricting women's opportunity and freedom of behaviour, often on the basis of gender. The women identify various social views which differ from their own values and describe their reaction to these cultural messages. Double messages which put women in a position of conflict (i.e. the importance of both women's career roles and family roles) were identified by three women . Lori sums up the confusion felt by the women as they try to find a place to fit in our society, and a realistic role to identify with.

Socially Defined Roles

The main theme which emerged as the women talked about being influenced by society's messages is that they are fighting against social views which differ from their personal values. They each identified various perspectives within society which they oppose.

Ashley identified the social view which promotes women's advancement and personal success through careers. Her response is one of carefully weighing the values of power and success against her own valuing of relationships. Marie finds women in her occupation are influenced a great deal by socially defined norms for women's behaviour.

She feels, because her occupational therapy profession is predominantly female, there are unreasonable expectations to behave in unassertive and submissive ways. Tara explains her belief that society dictates what women's roles should be. She finds society's definition of appropriate female roles limiting and inappropriate. Pointing out that these views are often based on incorrect assessments of women's abilities and potential, she blames society for women's restricted opportunities in careers. Lori tells her story of growing up in a small town which normally socializes women to stay local, and not to "move on." She describes her response to that restrictive and personally discouraging social milieu.

Ashley sees society emphasizing the need to having two incomes per family and advancing women's careers. She sees this social message having an impact on her friends, who are pursuing careers, as well as herself.

> But I think society's kind of making that more, not mandatory, but, kind of stressing that more. For one thing two incomes [are] better than one right now. And women have just really moved up the ladder and tried to seek more career type goals or whatever.
>
> I think a lot [comes] just from viewing people I know. Probably before a few years ago women didn't go to university to seek careers. But, definitely, now they are and I think just listening to them... Their opinions are more like... yah I want to pursue this career and continue it like whether I have kids or not or family or not.

She articulates the difference between her family's messages and society's messages. She leans to valuing familial messages over societal messages about personal power and success.

> So probably in that sense she's [Mom] leaned more on the side of what's important - pursuing a career and letting that take up all your time, or, you know, furthering your family life whether that be friends like, socially or what's really important to you.
>
> There's also necessity like, if you have to work, you have to work. But, I think that's different from society saying that work is important, power and success and kind of furthering yourself at anybody's cost kind of thing.

In her Occupational Therapy profession, Marie recognizes that the women take on "screwed up things" [behaviours] based on social gender roles.

> I really felt like this was the most horrible hardest thing I could ever have to do... was work for women because they have taken on all these screwed up things that don't make sense. (Like that you have to keep your mouth shut in meetings. Yah, that you just have to not rock the boat, and know your place... *at the bottom*).

I asked Marie if this behaviour is expected because it would be considered "professional" or if it is expected as women's behaviour. She responded, "well there is an element of professionalism that I have to work on, but also OT is a woman's profession...so far."

Her reaction to societal expectations of women's behaviour seems to be one of intentionally disregarding and actively sidestepping role expectations. Marie reflects on her upbringing - de-emphasizing etiquette and not caring what others think of her.

> Well I think it goes back to this etiquette thing. Like I just never cared about...I never cared about what people thought of me. I don't know if that is significant, it sure is significant about me...I used to say well I'm weird and I'm proud. For example, I'm going to discard all this crap about like, you shouldn't be too fat or too skinny, like *just give me a break with all that crap!*

As Tara talked, it became evident that her opinions about women's roles are not only from her mother's example, but also are in reaction to society's limiting molds for women's roles.

> In the past women weren't expected to run their own company or whatever and I think that's great that women can have that opportunity. There's no reason why we shouldn't anymore.
>
> I think women should be able to go into any career they desire and not be limited by the fact that there aren't any women currently in the profession. Someone has to break the ground.

Tara explains her view that society dictates social norms and opportunities for women and men.

> But I think it's basically our culture and our society that dictates it. It's just kind of society's general view that says the norm is for women to be "this", you know, or "that". And the opportunities we are given are part of the norm.
>
> I think it's really important that we have the opportunities to go into all the professions that we want and not be limited by what society says you should or shouldn't do.

Tara sees society limiting the careers women can take on, "like there's still a lot of resistance against women being in certain occupations. They are not getting the same...

pay rate that their male counterparts are which is really sad." She lists other inaccurate notions she sees society promoting.

> I think it's all right for women to be the principal breadwinner in the household. I don't think the male should feel inferior for having a wife earn more money than [him].
>
> And intelligence definitely isn't related to sex. Which is what the thought was in the past, "well, women only have the capabilities to do this. So just let them stay at home and have the children and cook the food and do the laundry." Well that's ridiculous, women have a lot more ability than that. So utilize the abilities and let them be the best, go to their fullest.

Tara talks about the importance of women breaking away from society's limiting ideas, in order to change the opinion of the general public.

> I think it's really important to do what you want, not to be limited by society's view because society's view eventually changes. It just often takes a lot longer for society's view to change than for women to have the desire to go into those occupations.
>
> Someone has to break the ground. If I have the desire to go into one of those professions I would be afraid to be the first one to break the ground.

Tara emphasizes the importance of making your own decisions and living with the consequences, rather than letting society tell you what to do. She summarizes her solution to restrictive socialization - "do what is right for you."

> I don't think anyone else should dictate or tell you what you should or shouldn't do because it's not their life. It's your life. You are the one that has to deal with the consequences or outcomes of your actions and your decisions. So why should someone else tell me, you know, I should be an engineer if I don't want to be an engineer. That's not what would make me happy, so I want to do ... what's right for me.

Lori has first hand experience feeling limited by socially promoted gender definitions. She describes the small town setting she grew up in as restrictive and personally confining.

> Probably a big influence has been where I came from which was a small town where probably the majority of the girls my age, and the majority of people in my town, just expected young women to stay in the town - to marry someone who is local to settle down - to take some job, whatever it may be - like a secretary or a clerk in a store or whatever...and not... They don't expect women to go on because there are very few women who do go on from our town.

Lori recalls as a child being discouraged by messages she received at school that boys were better than girls.

> I think that a lot of it came from just being told that (I don't know whether this is - I'm sure it is not intentional) in the school system, being told that boys are just better than girls. So I mean if I can't be a boy, which is the best, then I didn't want to be anything. And that's the message that I got - that girls were kind of inferior.

Lori's reaction was one of anger and determination to prove herself. Her response flows from her confident identity as a woman.

> And so in high school I became known as, I don't know. In the town I came from if you were called a liberated woman, it was like calling you some bad name. And so I became known far and wide as someone... I just focused on being female and I think it was almost, to a lot of the men I grew up with, seen as kind of aggressive - wanting to be female and taking that attitude, doing what I wanted to do.

I asked Lori if she was supported by her sister at this time but she said they were in different spaces. As a result, she says, "it [was] kind of lonely!" Lori's individual rebellion dissipated when she reached university and experienced more support for her role as a woman.

> In high school I continued to do the things I had done before - which were basically kind of rebelling against everything that everyone in the town and at school told me, you know, "what a woman was"... I would say, "well, I don't think so."
>
> So I came to university and I think I have mellowed a bit because I don't feel as attacked here. I don't feel that I have to be as defensive.

Summary These women are powerfully impacted by socially defined roles. Ashley acknowledges that social messages have caused her to pursue a career, yet she still is inclined to pursue her family care-giving role most seriously. Marie's upbringing did not stress the importance of following social convention, so she feels confined around women who demand particular behaviour. She dreads having to work with women who conform to social convention and wonders if she will survive in such a restrictive work environment. Tara believes she must continue to do what is right for her, with the goal of being a pioneer for women to come. Lori reacts to limiting role definitions with anger and determination. These traits have enabled her to leave her small town, continue her education and enjoy more support as the woman she believes she is.

Double Messages

As the women talked about society's influence, they consistently identified contradicting social messages directed at women. The double messages specifically mentioned by Dani and Marie were about the importance of both women's careers and the family care-giving role.

In the small town culture where Marie's mom tried to practice medicine, the social pressures had her caught in a no-win situation. I asked Marie why her mother didn't work part time so she wouldn't have had to give up her practice.

> Because they lived in a small town. (Like this is 1970/71 here - this is not the stone age, you know!) But anyway they lived in this little town up north and she worked in this clinic and she was the only lady doctor, obviously, and they said at that point that nobody there was allowed to work part time, nobody.
>
> They had this open line radio and people would phone in and gossip. They talked about my mother on the radio and people said things like, "how can that woman leave those kids with a nanny?" or whatever. (Like we had the best nanny in the world, OK!)
>
> Like I guess, my Mom got these messages that it wasn't acceptable to not be there for her kids and be at work all day. Because I know she thought the nanny was awesome. I think she definitely thought my Dad was inadequate to really take care of us much.
>
> So anyway when they said she couldn't work part time throughout, she finally decided "OK, fine, I'll quit."
>
> Anyway, right after she left the clinic one of her patients died of a stroke and some lady in Safeway or whatever came over talking about her and saying, "how could she leave her patient, you know, like that" ... She felt all this pressure. That is pioneering the role of *the lady doctor in the town*.

At a different point in the interview Marie ties in her experience from an anger workshop, where she realized that socially, women are overloaded with responsibility.

> I went to this thing on women and anger. And she talked about women's roles changing and how it's not OK for women to be angry kind of thing. But she talked more about why are women angry and it was about how... OK we used to have all these rules like we take care of everybody in the family and then we got all these rules like you have to have a career, but we never lost the first part and so now we have both and you have everything.

Marie applies this awareness to third world populations as well as her mother, who was expected to perform both career and family roles.

> I feel that this is totally happening in the third world where women do all the work and take care of everybody and the men sit around and drink, and that's a gross exaggeration and generalization but that's definitely a trend that's well documented.
>
> And I can totally relate 'cause you know that's what happened to my Mom I mean she went to Med. school and she had to give it up for her family and she disappointed everybody. Like my Mom is a big disappointment to my grandmother. She didn't live up to these dreams of being a successful doctor and career woman. I don't know what would make my grandmother happy, really.

Here, Marie links together socially defined roles for women and the double bind her mother was squeezed into. Expected, on one hand, by her mother (Marie's grandmother) to achieve as a medical doctor, and the town people, on the other hand, to stay at home with her children, she could please no one.

Early in the interview when I asked Dani which views on women's roles she was aware of, she immediately identified the "classic" double bind society puts women in.

> Ones [social messages] that I have found are... I think now-a-days that women *should* be out in the work place and I think that mother's who stay at home with children or women that don't work now-a-days are kind of looked down upon, that they are lazy that they have no ambition, that kind of thing. Then at the same time there is almost the opposite where women who put their kids in daycare so they can work are kind of looked down upon, too, 'cause they should be at home. So I think there is almost a double standard.

Dani deals with this personally as she desires to be accepting of circumstances in her future. She wonders if she will be able to forgive herself if she cannot afford to stay home with her children. "I guess if circumstances didn't allow that and I had to go to work and stuff I would probably feel a bit guilty about it."

From a slightly different perspective, Lori sees society portraying women in conflicting ways. She blames the media for portraying career women unrealistically, which dissuades caring women, like herself, from seeing themselves fitting into the uncaring career woman stereotype.

> The media influences to a greater extent than any of us are aware of. I think that they may be misrepresenting women in the work place to a large extent...and women with their families. In that they show them in the work force as being

> tough and, gritty kind of....I don't know, just generally hard, harsh women who don't really care. I think that in everything that you do... well, *I am going bring some sense of humanity no matter what job I get*. And yet, they portray women as [uncaring], and so I think a lot of women maybe shy away from careers because they think....it doesn't fit who they are.

Lori recognizes that she has been reluctant to make a decision partly because she does not see an opportunity to integrate herself - her real (caring) person - into a career woman role, according to the (uncaring) stereotypes portrayed.

> I think that may possibly have something to do with my reluctance to make a decision on a career is that I see them cast into molds and I can't see myself fitting into those molds that I see modeled in any of the media. It is very rare that you see a woman who is shown as being competent in her job without being ...*while being* pleasant... Like they make [them] to be really competent and really grouchy or totally incompetent and really happy ... there's nothing in between for real people - real women.

Summary The double messages these women are receiving create feelings of confusion and anger. Marie identifies her anger at the responsibility overload she sees women having to take. She observes this affecting women in the third world, as well as her mother, who was unsupported in her medical practice. Dani wonders if she will feel guilty, due to society's pressures, if she can not stay home with her children as a working woman. Lori realizes the media makes it difficult for her to find a career role which fits for her. She sums up the confusion felt by the women as they try to find career identities while the images of women in the media are so unrealistic.

Part III - The Present *Experience*

This last section addresses the research question more directly. How are these women influenced by various views on women's career and family roles in the midst of their career-decision-making process? What is the present experience of each of the women as they are influenced by views on women's roles?

The first section of the results, about the women's "want" statements, told us about their dreams, desires and designs. In many ways, what they want for their futures speaks to what they value in their lives. Valuing both family and career and combining these roles are evident in these women's experiences.

In the second section of the results, the influence of mothers, parents and other family experiences also revealed what the women believe is important. The influence of social views different from their own heightens and complements this awareness.

As the women disclose what they are presently experiencing about role issues, a third theme emerges regarding their guiding beliefs. In this last section the women discuss what they value about themselves and what they believe to be possible for their futures. Believing that they are caregivers, what do these women believe will prevent them from missing their goals? What do these women believe is ultimately most important in life, in order to survive and respect themselves? Where is their focus, and how does it keep them carrying on day to day?

Valuing Care-Giving

A significant aspect of what these women are presently experiencing, with regard to women's roles, concerns their high valuation of caring for others. When asked to prioritize their roles, four of these women placed their family roles over their career roles. This is consistent with what they said about the importance of care-giving in their lives.

Dani desires both career and family, but if combining gets too difficult she is willing to sacrifice her career to care for her family.

> I think I would put my family over my job. I think that's a big thing, so I would love to have a career and a family and juggle everything but if that wasn't possible I definitely would sacrifice whether it would be going from full-time to part-time or part-time to no-time, but for the family.

If all else fails, Dani relies on her ability to give to others. Drawing from this deep inner source she finds personal satisfaction.

> Well, what if I never meet this guy or never have kids, you know? I think there's things that I can offer, whether that would be, you know, being a foster parent or being a big sister or, you know, I think there's different ways to realize those goals. You know it may not be the same as having a family of your own, but just offering what I think that I have to give.

Lori hopes her career will align with her care-giving role. She proclaimed herself as a nurturer. "And then I also see myself being... well... a nurturer for all of the people - well that's actually how I see myself I guess is ***as a nurturer.***"

Ashley tells what she experiences as a care-giver in the workplace. Her care-giving perspective puts her in a difficult position with others who do not equally value it.

> I'm kind of feeling pulled in two different directions, maybe even feeling a little bit discriminated against... I've kind of felt like that a little bit this year. Well, just for what I want to do [the care-giving] it's like... well... that's not good enough. It's seen as a lower type of position.

Again, feeling pulled in two different directions, wondering if her care-giving value is validated in her workplace, her care-giving and work roles place her in conflict.

Marie describes herself as someone who has internalized the values of caring and taking responsibility for others.

> The things that are affecting me and stuff that I have internalized, that I believe [is]... I guess part of that is, to care about my family and my relationships, like my boyfriend and stuff. And so I make it so that I have to work things out with all these other people... I feel like I'm taking care of or taking responsibility for ... or I could take responsibility for all those people.

On a larger scale, Marie compares herself, as a wealthy North American, to other people in the world saying, "like, I hate that about myself...I feel so guilty that I have so much... Well, I guess I just feel a lot of responsibility to give everything that I have away, you know."

When I asked Marie to discuss how she believes she has come to have her values about responsibility and caring for other's well-being, she explained, "well, I think there's more pressure for women to take on those kinds of roles." She also recalled her mother's self-denying motto: "whatever you need to survive you should have, but everything else that would make you comfortable you have to give away to other people."

Fear Of Loss

The women in this study show a willingness to fulfill care-giving roles, yet they also express a fear of losing something, perhaps within themselves, in doing so. In their present experience they deal with a tension between valuing caring for others and valuing caring for themselves.

Three of the women identify their mothers as being self-sacrificial for their families and therefore restricted from pursuing their own interests, desires, health and well-being. Ashley sees her mother not taking time for herself and working extremely hard to help other people. Marie fears being stuck caring for others' needs, like her mother, and never having her own needs taken care of. Lori sees her mother stuck in her family responsibilities. Dani observes an older woman who never pursued her own interests for the sake of her family's interests.

Marie feels responsible personally and globally. This burden she feels comes partly from social pressures but also has been reinforced by her mother's example of self-sacrifice. Marie's main concern about marriage and family responsibilities is that she will somehow lose herself by caring for others' needs. She explains how her present relationship with a man highlights this concern for her.

> There's some concerns that I have. It is about whether or not I am going to be ultimately responsible for both of our needs being met. I feel like for some reason that I get this impression about him that he's not real responsible. And it just kills me to say that.

Marie acknowledges the ongoing issue which she deals with -- to figure out how to take care of other people without neglecting her own desires. "Because my dreams involve taking care of other people and I have figure out how to..."

The main thing Ashley sees in her mother's life, which she does not want for her own life, is self-sacrifice, to the extent of not being able to enjoy life.

> I guess maybe she sacrificed too much some times, not leaving enough time for herself to enjoy what she likes doing. And I guess I don't want that for myself. I expect to kind of work hard and stuff but I also would hopefully have time to just enjoy life a little bit more... The more I have grown up and probably the more I have experienced in life, I think there's more to life than thoroughness. So you know, I have probably tended to go away from that a bit.

Ashley sees her mother's hard work, and busy caring for others as good, but she does not want to be stuck in a cycle of ambitiousness.

> I guess just being ambitious is good to a point but I think that definitely people get too ambitious. Like at work I could probably stay at work and, you know, over time and everything else. And then that gets to be a habit and I don't really want that.

I asked Ashley what her mother did not enjoy in life which she would like to enjoy. She identifies her desire to rest and receive care from others rather than always giving to others.

> I guess more time to myself. Like, she didn't really have it, I don't think anyway. Probably I would like to have more time to myself to do things I'll like to do rather than always doing something for someone else maybe or always caring for someone else. I'd rather care for myself or be cared for a little bit more.

Marie identifies a deep fear she still lives with: being stuck caring for others while not receiving care herself. She recalls her family dynamics as a child, when her brother received far more attention and affection than her.

> Somewhere along the way someone decided he had this learning disability. And...so he wasn't expected to achieve the way I was. So, I mean I'm sure that's a real thing and everything but, he was really pampered, because when I was a kid I was running around without time to get hugged and he was getting hugged, you know, 'cause he wasn't running around.
>
> I remember us playing this game "baby." One of us would be the mother and I would just want *so much* to be the baby. But I was never allowed.
>
> And now I have this major complex where I never want to be stuck somewhere where I am doing that. Yah, doing all the work, taking care of somebody else, cuddling someone else and not getting cuddled.

It seems that Marie is torn between wanting to be more caring than her Mom (who Marie feels neglected her emotional needs) yet not so self-denying that she does not take care of herself and receive care from others.

This conflict is also played out in Marie's deep desire for both achievement and care-giving roles in her life. Marie is in a faculty which requires high achievement. When her mother was dying of cancer and Marie wanted to reduce her course load at university, she was placed in a "catch-22" situation. She describes the intense conflict she experienced when her department refused her the opportunity to drop classes. "Well I guess I am imposing some of this on myself and I could have said, 'screw all of you', you know." When I asked her what the alternatives were she responded, "I don't know, psychogenic fugue...split... right on top of a garbage heap."

It seems that Marie felt her mother expected her to perform a care-giving role in addition to the achievement role her family groomed her for. Marie also tells about a key experience in which her mother released her from the pressure of taking responsibility for the family.

> When my Mom got sick she told this counsellor this and then I went to see this counsellor. He told me that my Mom had told him that she was really terrified when she was dying that I would give up my whole life, like my career or whatever, my dream... Like she didn't say my dreams, she said my career....which is funny but anyway... she thought that I'd give up my career, like to take care of her. I'd give up my life because she was dying, that somehow that was going to be the end of my life, you know?
>
> That was really neat that I got that information that she was afraid of that and that she didn't really want that - that she didn't really expect that of me. So, somewhere in there I decided to stop doing everything for my brother and my Dad...and I moved out because I couldn't deal with their mess... and I didn't want to clean it up anymore so I left... And now I'm living room and board and I have someone taking care of me and it's really great.

Marie's story clearly elucidates the relief experienced as the conflicting roles are released and the need for self care is articulated and acted upon.

Lori's present experience is dominated by her fear of choosing a career which may not mesh with the rest of her family priorities. She fears she will be "stuck" in a career, unhappy and unable to change. She explains her fear of the permanency of choices, causing her to delay her decisions.

> I'm almost afraid to make a decision because if I make the wrong decision then I end up being miserable for the *rest of my life.* So if you stay in the process you don't have to deal with the consequences of your decision.

Lori refers to her view of "reality," as compared to what others are telling her. Being tied down by family responsibilities scares her, since she saw her mother's career limited by family commitments.

> OK everyone says you can go back to school and you can change anytime that you want but the reality of it is that I'll probably get into a career - which ever it may be and then I'll probably end up starting a family. Economically it's just really not that viable to pick up and go back and change.

It seems that ever since childhood she has feared a loss of herself and her freedom.

> Before I got married I was convinced that once you get married that you would just completely be swallowed up by your husband. I don't know where that came from, but, I was completely terrified because I was convinced that I was just going to lose who I was. And so I went through a big dilemma.

As Lori detailed her childhood experiences she revealed a part of her character which stands in strong defense of her self. In the small town, where she grew up, her response to the restrictive role norms was to work around the demands and not let her abilities be limited.

> I always tried to not fit into that. I always tried to go around the demands intentionally because I didn't want to fit ...and I guess that's my personality coming out - I didn't want to conform. Even, I remember when I was young I would just become completely angry and I would do the absolute opposite of what they expected.
>
> Fifteen yah, I think that's when I became almost...I became almost "strident." I was determined to do something important with myself - and with my life.

She explains her anger at the prescribed roles as an instinctual defense of her ability to indeed do something important with her life.

> I don't...I don't know.....I don't know I think it's... I don't know... It's a very basic instinct I think because I guess I've always just done it.

Dani tells a story about a 48 year old friend who did not pursue a career while raising her family. Dani sees that this woman has nothing left for herself now that her family has left home. Dani makes a key decision that she will get her career first and worry about family later.

> [She] raised the kids at home and had basically given up any kind of profession she would have had for her kids and her husband. Once she was at this age she was going crazy at home because the kids weren't home and, you know, [her] husband was out working and, you know, she really had nothing.
>
> And so I saw that and I said well, lets do it now 'cause I couldn't see myself going to school when I was forty years old or fifty years old. So I kind of saw, like she wasn't happy sitting at home, you know, she was great when - happy - when the kids were home but the kids are all grown up and gone and she had kind of nothing left for herself. So I guess that kind of influenced me too in deciding, you know, to get a career and then worry about the rest after.

Tara's focus is preventative. She plans to avoid being limited as a woman. Clearly deriding gender roles, Tara describes her view of herself. She is a self defined person, unlimited, and responsible for her own choices.

> Well I don't really see myself as a *woman* - I see myself as a person that has goals and objectives in life. I don't really believe that women should be set into anything so I really see it as being very open.
>
> Being a woman is anything I want it to be and I don't really see myself limited in any dimension. I think women can go in any profession and be whatever you want to be. If you want to stay at home that is fine but you make that choice. You don't let someone else force you into that...Or you can, you know, have a career or be whatever you want.
>
> You don't have to be really set, so I guess being a woman is being a person. It is an individual type thing... so you do what you want - what is right for you.

Summary The women all speak to the importance of not losing their freedom to be themselves. Specifically they view constant caring for others, constant self-sacrifice and neglect of their own personal rejuvenation as the main threats to their identities.

Ashley does not want her own life to be as self-sacrificial as her mother's. Rather, she wants to be able to enjoy her life and her interests and to receive care from others rather than always caring for others. Similarly, Marie fears being stuck caring for others while not receiving care for herself. She hopes to strike a balance between caring for others and not giving up her desires. She hopes to model this to her children, unlike her mother's unhealthy relationship with her. Both Marie's mother and grandmother have pressured her to not give up her career for a man, placing her in conflict. She desperately desires both a family and career. The conflict between caring for her dying mother and achieving her career goals flared up when she was not allowed to lighten her course load. Her mother's freeing message came as a huge relief, finally allowing her to not take ultimate responsibility for her family's needs. Lori desires a career that will give her the flexibility to make changes in her life and to pursue her happiness. However, she is afraid she will make a wrong choice. Seeing her mom tied down by family responsibilities scares Lori about her own future. It seems that ever since childhood Lori has feared a loss of herself. She felt limited as a child growing up in a repressive community, but her instinctual anger protected the woman she knew she was. Her determination propels her beyond the boundaries of the confining social roles she grew up with. Dani has decided she will get her career before her family responsibilities prevent her from pursuing her own interests. Tara clearly aims to not be limited by society's views. She allows no one to define her but herself; she will do what is right for her.

Gaining Awareness

These women all have a guiding *sense of self*, knowing what is important to them, what they value and what they want in life. Awareness of these convictions has emerged and taken form at different times for each woman, and through different circumstances.

Some of the women mentioned how and when they acquired their awareness of their values, needs, and guiding beliefs. From an early age, Ashley was raised in a family which conveyed values about family life and hard work. Dani's family has had a significant impact, yet she mentions a dating relationship, and several role models who have caused her to realized her deepest desires and needs. Tara's most meaningful values have formed through her family experience as well. The loss of her father created an urgent need for her mother to be competent and flexible, providing for the needs of her children. These are the qualities which Tara values for her life as well. A similar crisis in Marie's family, given her mother's unfortunate career experience, Marie's unfortunate upbringing, and eventually her mother's early death have caused Marie to value stability, family and helping others emotionally. Lori identifies her present career-decision-making process as a stressful experience clouding her sense of clear values and heightening her identity crisis.

Ashley's career decision seems to be grounded in a deep conviction about who she believes she is and what she has always wanted.

> It's something I've just done. But, I guess I also know that that was one goal that I wanted to pursue and so I just kind of went after it I guess.
>
> It is something I'm doing because I want to enjoy and do it and that's what I've always wanted. I guess that's true... that's probably my biggest - like that's what I want to do - that's what I desire to do.

Ashley knows she wants to combine career and family roles. Ideally, she wants to be home with her children .

> My perspective is more like I want a career to start out or whatever, but my goal is hopefully to get married and have kids and when I have kids I don't particularly want to be working.

For Dani, several experiences since high school have helped her formulate her vision of her future. Through a dating relationship she was forced to think further ahead in her future about what she really wants. She describes how the relationship affected her.

> He was trying to find a family of his own kind of thing. So, he wanted to get married right away and have kids and I was just like, "no, wait a minute." I do want that eventually, but right now my career is first. I want for my own, I want a career and to get established in that career, you know, kind of work at it a bit before I commit my life to other people, which is what I think is necessary when you get married and if you start a family.

Dani describes the "fairy tale" relationship she had initially anticipated. Now, she sees she wasn't ready for a family commitment. A few years "on her own" have given her more of a sense of her true desires.

> When [the relationship] started I thought it would be so good to get married and have kids and, you know, it's kind of most people's fairy tale to fall in love and have kids. When that happened I realized - just wait a minute, you know, this isn't really what I want, if it had happened five years down the road or four years, like once I'm out of school, I think I would be more ready for that. [Now,] I'm almost finished with school and I think I have a better sense of what I want in life and what I expect.

Before university, Dani says she had not been aware of her values or personal needs in life. Now, she knows that rather than moving into a marriage and being dependent on her husband, she wants to establish herself financially and personally in order to be prepared for her career in the years to come. Dani says she has realized that the idealized mother-at-home image is not realistic for her, therefore, she must keep up her career while raising children.

> Now I realize that more than likely that [the fairy tale] is not going to happen. So I've realized that once I have this career... I have worked so hard for this and I want to use it. I don't want to have to depend on a spouse for a living.
>
> I want to have kids and I would prefer to definitely stay home a few years with the children and raise them but I think that once they are in school I would go back to a career even if it was just part time.
>
> Because I think that would be important, just being the type of person that I am, like I can't see myself sitting at home when there's no kids to raise. I would just go stir crazy. And I have come to realize that. You know, before I thought oh, you, it's just kind of a fairy tale, but now I'm like there's no way I could live that fairy tale...I'd...go nuts, you know?

Dani determines that much of what she wants is related to her independence. She explains what she expects herself to be as a woman.

> Well, like to have a career and not be totally dependent on someone else, but yet to have a family if that's what you desire. Just to be an independent individual who can make their own decisions.
>
> So that is something I have come to realize is that I want to be able to live a life that I want and have a say in what goes on.

Since her mother's death, Marie is finding her own way, making her own decisions and seeking resolution of some hurtful memories. She describes several significant discoveries about her values which have emerged through the crisis of her mother's illness and death . First, she wants a family, a home and stability.

> But then my Mom got sick and I realized that I really need stability and stuff. And just... not roots, but a place that's home and people and I guess, I figure people need a family, you know?

Second, she wants a career which gives her freedom to pursue her dreams.

> I just remember this one night just crying my eyes out trying to decide this 'cause I totally didn't want to put myself into this little package and say "yah, this is what I want to be, 'an OT'," you know, like to me that's so limiting - some profession with a label. It looked like the whole thing was so structured, the whole program, the practicums in the summer, you know, no more time for me to dreams my dreams...

Third, Marie decides that helping people is the most important thing in her life.

> What made me jump in is that I decided that I didn't have to save the whole world and that it was OK to like ...I can't remember... I was trying to journal it all out

> and I realized I needed to focus on more immediate helping. And I could do this by focusing on individuals that I can be in direct relationship with. I wanted to help people the most powerful way and that was really the most important thing. That's what the crisis was all about.

Tara makes it clear that her mother is, and always has been, her central source of influence. She values hard work because of her mother's example but, she hopes to avoid the hardship her mother experienced when Tara's father died. Tara believes getting her career established before having a family is the solution.

> I guess I am influenced a lot by my mother because I look at my Mom and I say I don't want to go through what she went through trying to create a career after you have kids and stuff.
>
> So I looked at it in the traditional way where, lets establish a career and lets worry about family afterwards. Not necessarily that I have to be set in my career but at least I need to be finished my education before I think of having a family and all that kind of stuff.

Lori's awareness of her direction is more obscure. First, she explains how as a woman she feels "set-up" to achieve, but is given no direction.

> Ever since I grew up it's always been instilled in all of us that you can be whatever you want to be - the world is open to you. I grew up with the idea that I could be anything. But now I've gotten to the point of deciding what do I want to be and it's scary and it's intimidating and I don't know which direction to go. It's sooo... wide open and I have no idea what to do. So, before and in practice it sounds like a good thing... but at this point in my life I almost wished it wasn't so wide open.

Lori makes it clear that she feels unsupported and alone in the process. She struggles to make a career decision.

> I wish, [it could] ... just narrow down a little bit. I think I'm almost getting to feel, I don't know what to call it... frustrated ... or yah, frustrated. Kind of an abandoned feeling that they set you out and say, "go for it," but no one says, you know, no one will even tell you, "oh, you are really good at this, you should try this," because no one wants to influence your decision, because it's your decision.
>
> So it's... it's become it's quite a large decision and a hard decision to make. It's hard to even educate yourself about the options in order to make a good decision. I find it really hard.

Lori used a well developed analogy to express where she is now in the midst of her career-decision-making process:

> Actually I was thinking about it and last night it came to me...I got this kind of analogy. It's like someone has bought you a ticket - like an airplane ticket, but there's no destination on it. So the ticket's all paid up and, you know, you are

> going somewhere but you just don't know where you are going! And no one will tell you ...they just say, "oh, you'll know when you get there."... well ...it's kind of hard to catch a plane when you don't know which one you are supposed to catch. That's how I thought about it.

She describes the impact of this "crisis" on her sense of identity.

> Yah, it's actually.... a hard time right now...a hard time to... it's hard just to maintain some sense of identity, self identity, in the midst of all these changing ideas of what I could be and what I am.

Lori articulates the need to know and maintain a sense of identity in the midst of the many changing ideas around her. She wants to integrate who she is and who she could be.

Guiding Beliefs

The women refer to specific beliefs and values about themselves and the world which guide and direct their priorities and decisions in their present experience. Of all the women revealed about themselves, their statements about what really matters to them are most outstanding. These beliefs offer strength, stability, hope and direction to the women and provide a touch point of self from which they can move back and forth in their changing world.

When asked to respond to the initial question at the conclusion of the interview, Ashley summed up her view on women's career and family roles, having been influenced somewhat more by her traditional upbringing than by modern society.

> In summary I think I'm influenced to the degree that I want to pursue a career but I don't think that I'm swayed as easily as society is telling me, you know, you *have* to pursue a career, you have to be powerful and successful. I think I am somewhat more influenced about family roles where society is saying, you know, more equality and more equal type stuff - I'm kind of in the middle on that, I'm traditional yet more thinking modernly.

Ashley's belief in the need to take time to replenish herself, get cared for and to enjoy life illustrate how her lifestyle will differ from her traditional upbringing. In reaction to her family's example, she has determined that she wants to have time to enjoy her life, which is what really matters to her.

> I guess for me I just kind of recognize the need to take time for myself. I think even throughout school, I know at the end of the week it's like "oh, OK now I can

> just go home and, you know, not worry about caring for someone else." I can just take care of myself or I just want somebody to come and take care of me.
>
> I guess even with Betty [her sister], seeing that she gets so busy doing work all the time. She has said so many times, "I just wish I could enjoy something else," you know, other than working all the time.
>
> It's the same with Dad, you know, I've seen him just work, work, work, and when he has time off he really does enjoy himself and I guess maybe those are the influences that have kind of - I guess that brings out the importance to me of how that is important.

Although Dani has an idea of how she wants her life to be, she believes that "doing her best" is all that really matters. She will cope with barriers to her dreams by depending on her positive attitude as well as remaining flexible in all circumstances.

> So much for the fairy tale, this isn't what it was supposed to be. Like, there's always a chance that may change, which I think would be really hard to deal with. Because, I just kind of see myself as, OK this is what I want, and I'll be able to do that, and if I couldn't be able to do that for whatever reason it would be hard to deal with.
>
> Just knowing that I have done the best I can do. That's always been something - it doesn't matter what happens if you've tried your best. That would probably help me cope and go on. OK this is where I am and now what am I going to do, you know, and make modifications.

Near the end of the interview I asked Marie to answer the initial question again. For her, career and family don't converge, they vie for priority, creating a lack of decision and direction.

> Gee that's pretty hard, I don't know because I just, I can't really... like, it doesn't all come together this family, career stuff....it just doesn't come together... for me... I have no idea... *I just don't know which is more important.*

Marie agrees that she seems to want to combine her roles and keep them equal in priority. She described in a metaphor, a two sided coin. We gradually honed the metaphor - she clearly wants both career and family, *together*.

> It's like they are like opposites sides of the same coin or something. The coin is like a gem that I am working for ... It's some really valuable thing. And...I'm working for it, and I'm going to get it... it's my goal.

Marie's eyes misted, feeling the painful feelings of helplessness as she described her fear of making the same mistake as her mother by forsaking her personal goals.

> Because I'm not going to settle for anything less but I feel really helpless, like it's not going to happen.

I asked Marie which hurt more: the thought of forsaking her career goals or giving up her family goals.

> It's just me that hurts I think, like... (sigh)... I don't know... Well I couldn't bear to see myself make the mistakes that my Mom made and to not be happy because I gave up too much somewhere and sold out somewhere. Yah...but I do that every day, you know.

In her present experience, what is most important to Tara is breaking away from society's rules by making decisions which are appropriate for her individual needs and desires. From her mother's experience of being "shunned" by society as a single parent, she has come to believe society's messages are usually restrictive and judgmental.

> I guess what kind of made me decide that what society says isn't necessarily right is the way a lot of people looked at single parents for a long time, especially female single parents - "well who are you?" you know.

> Well there are a lot of women who are better off being single parents. Because there's a lot of abuse in dysfunctional relationships. In the past it was expected that a woman should stay with a man because that's the person they married, and that's the person they should stay with regardless of how bad the situation is.

Tara explains how, as a result of her mother's experience, hard work means a lot to her as well as the belief that she can overcome barriers.

> I think that the work ethic is really important to me. I don't think, you know, I guess my values would be a lot different if my Dad had given my mom - you know when my dad had passed away, [if he] had a huge inheritance. Well then everything would have been handed to me, mom and my brothers on a silver platter. Well it wouldn't have meant as much to me as it does now, where I saw how much work it can be and that you can break the barriers and you can make it.

In her first year out of high school, Lori worked for a woman who caused her to realize that women can be excellent in their careers *and* be in control of their lives.

> For me she was almost the perfect role model of the working woman. She was completely dedicated to her work - she never married or had children and she believed she could do anything. She could achieve anything. So I think for me that was probably a positive thing to see that you can change... you are never stuck.

Seeing a woman "not stuck" seems to have opened Lori's eyes to the possibility of finding a suitable career for herself. However, with her goal of having both career and family roles, she sees a problem. Comparing herself to this woman she says:

> Right it was a bit different, because I could see why she could be as selfish, cutting herself off...or "selfish" - (*nice term.*)..as focused on her career as she was.
>
> I think that is part of why I believe... that's part of my dilemma is that I believe that women can do what whatever they want.

When I asked Lori if she believes that she can do whatever she wants she responded, "I don't know! I don't know what is wrong with that one... no... I'm working on that." When I suggested that Lori's ideal picture of her future seemed to involve her two roles (family and career) combined but not demanding at the same time, she responded, "Right, I don't know if that is realistic. I don't know, I guess I will always be ... an idealist... I will try to be realistically ideal."

Perhaps what matters most to Lori is knowing that she can do whatever she wants and that she will not be stuck anywhere she does not want to be. She has dreams and ideals which guide her based on what she knows she wants.

At the conclusion of the interview Lori added this comment which illustrates her trust of herself in the midst of many unknowns.

> I think I have come to more of an understanding of who I am. I think I have become much more aware, just through talking about it, of the people who have influenced me, unbeknownst to me. But I reacted to it and so, you know, I guess part of me knew what was going on.

Summary The core beliefs which guide these women in the midst of their career-decision-making process revolve around what they have come to value most in their lives. Ashley places herself on a family/society continuum which she has created. She has learned from her family that hard work is important yet she will aim for more balance in order to enjoy life. For Dani "doing her best" will be the attitude which will guide her through life's twists and turns. Marie lives in a perpetual tension between desiring family and career and being personally satisfied that she has not shortchanged herself along the way. Tara lives by the motto, "do what is right for you," believing that society's views are usually restrictive. She believes in her ability to overcome any barriers which may come her way. Lori's ideals make it difficult for her to make decisions in the present. She relies on her hope of finding a career in which she can be herself, and her trust in herself in the midst of many unknowns.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The following discussion will respond to the central findings of the study using the same outline as the results. Each section of findings will be discussed in light of the relevant literature. I hope to draw out the central findings, issues and implications as a result of the women's responses to the research question.

Part I - Future *Dreams/Desires/Designs*

The women in this study articulated their dreams, ideals and goals from varying perspectives. They repeatedly used the phrase, "I want..." as they related their visions of their futures. All the women's future dreams include wanting careers, wanting families and wanting to combine the two.

Career Plans/Roles

Most women in the nineties are working; the women I interviewed also plan to work. Hochschild (1989) says two thirds of all women in our society are part of the work force, and others predict that by the year 2000 the percentage will increase to 70% (Holms & Esses, 1988). Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) note that "women who work appear to be at a psychological advantage compared to their nonworking counterparts, particularly when they work because they wish to do so" (p. 208). Increased power in the marriage relationship and higher levels of self esteem are reported as results of working.

Before we can understand how these women are influenced regarding their role issues, we must appreciate the cultural milieu which molds their career aspirations. Women in our society are influenced by the culture which promotes independence, success and wealth. The women in this study report having been influenced by society to pursue independence through careers. They all value family ideals and are willing to accommodate their career plans to family needs, but each expressed a desire to get her career started first. One woman in the study put it simply: "I looked at it the *traditional* type way where, let's establish a career and let's worry about family afterward."

Each woman I interviewed told her story of arriving at a sense of direction through realizing her unique values and concerns. Their choices are based on valuing convenience and flexibility, accommodating their family role and using their personal abilities. The women worry about not finding a suitable career *immediately*, fearing they may become “stuck”- unable to make changes later on in life.

Considering the constricting realities they may have to face once they are married with children drives these women to prepare themselves to the utmost in the present. Sidel, (1990) in her discussion of the realities facing working women, refers to realistic projections about divorce, single parenting and earning power for women. Comparing statistics on median incomes for women who are single, married, divorced, or single parents, in various higher or lower level professions, she notes the social myth that one can invariably work her way up the ladder to acquire the American Dream. She adds, "these issues are particularly poignant today as both opportunity and standard of living decline for millions of Americans" (p.180). In light of these realities, one must ask, what will happen to the young female dreamers of today? Will they inevitably be the poor of tomorrow?

All the women in this study talked about making a career decision based on their abilities to help people as well as their desire for a career that will make a difference in the world. The women clearly want to help people beyond their family and social networks; it is something that they are pursuing professionally. Unlike the women I interviewed, who uniformly chose helping careers, Sidel (1990) reports that the women she talked to were not pursuing care-giving careers. Marveling at the uniformity of their materialistic images of success she notes, "rarely did anyone speak of caring for the sick or helping the poor; only occasionally did someone hope to make [sic] difference in the lives of others" (p. 223).

Family Plans/Roles

Every woman in this study envisions her future in the context of meaningful relationships. This is consistent with the female development literature (Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986; Surrey, 1985). She acknowledges the dimension of interpersonal relationships which must be integrated into female decisions and development. In the interviews, as each of the women talked about their anticipated futures, they described themselves as wives in ideal marriage relationships and they communicated their concept of egalitarian roles. Similarly, the literature points to the continuing trend for women to plan families regardless of their career aspirations (Baber & Monaghan, 1988; Evans, Bourassa, & Woolbright, 1985). Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) note that in the studies of variables affecting women's career choices, a consistent factor is "the expectation that women's lives will usually include, if not revolve around, the roles of homemaking and childrearing" (p. 24). Sidel (1990) describes her notion of the type of young women in our society which she names the "Neotraditionalist" in comparison to the "New American Dreamer":

> If the New American Dreamers are searching for their identity through work, planning to define themselves first and then make emotional attachments, these Neotraditionalists plan to define themselves through both work and family. Virtually all of them have serious, concrete career goals and plans for how to achieve those goals; but commitment to family...is of at least equal importance. (p.40)

A couple of the women initially found themselves automatically defining their anticipated wife role as a traditional housewife. After reconsidering, the women agreed that the role of wife has changed a lot over the years, describing the role more in the context of an equal relationship. Gerson (1985) sums up these women's approach to career and family roles: "perhaps the most critical underpinning of women's domesticity is stable marriage. Permanent marriage makes economic dependency and full-time motherhood possible and contributes to a context in which childbearing and mothering seem natural" (p. 205). The question remains, is these women's dependence on their husbands for financial and emotional support realistic; is it a reliable assumption on which to make life plans?

The women repeatedly use the word "equal" to describe their desired marriage relationships. These equal roles seem to be based on not wanting to be dominated, but desiring to be heard in their marriages. Hochschild (1989) speaks to the myth 90's couples live by when they report that they share the child care and housework "equally." She says this is more of an image with which couples would like to identify than a reality.

The women anticipate working out domestic duties with their spouses, yet they were not able to clearly identify the dual-career couple issues such as Rapoport and Rapoport (1971) summarize: *overload dilemmas* (seen as a result of the couple's high aspirations and involvement in their careers and homes); *values conflicts* (being different-nontraditional - than family and friends); *personal conflicts* (over sex role behaviors); *role-cycling dilemmas* (sequencing and coordinating stages of careers with one another).

Research regarding women's and men's relative work load has reported a consistent theme for years. Hochschild, (1989) referring to the studies of Robinson (1965), Walker and Wood (1967), Presser (1977), Duncan and Morgan (1978), Baruch and Barnett (1983), and Googins (1985), reports a leisure gap between men and women is reported, with women consistently taking more responsibility in the home, regardless of their outside employment. In Hochschild's (1989) study of 50 dual career couples with children, she found that 70% of the men surveyed did between one third and one half of the work in the home (including child care); 10% did less than one third. It is interesting to note the pressure to appear "politically correct" as a couple, which amounts to appearing egalitarian on top, but traditional underneath (Hochschild, 1989).

The women's dreams about sharing responsibilities in the home are contingent on finding a man who is willing to participate. They hope to find someone who will be flexible in sharing the home roles so they can pursue their career aspirations. They described specifically how they envision their partners contributing to the functioning of the home: either splitting the duties exactly in half, or taking a more traditional approach - the wife assuming the role of care-giver in the home and the husband being the primary breadwinner. They also express specific desires about how they want their partners to be as fathers. The main thing the women are looking for in a partner is an attitude of willingness - they hope he “wants” to be involved.

They hope to find caring partners who will actively participate in home responsibilities, but will they end up doing most of it themselves? Unfortunately, the socialization process for men is caught in the slow cogs of change. The likelihood of men sharing more of the home and child care duties is about equivalent to the likelihood of men’s work being paid less than women in the work force; social reinforcement of men’s roles outside the home is a bulwark not easily changed. The workplace simply does not acknowledge the need for a man to take an afternoon off with a sick child. Further, it is simply considered unmanly to take responsibility for what has been considered "women's work."

There is some evidence of sensitive involved fathers in our society, however, these references are usually limited to the upper class (Sidel, 1990). In the majority of homes, mothers do most of the home and child care, while men "spend an average of fifteen to twenty minutes a day in direct participation with their children" (Sidel, 1990, p. 203). Further, "in families that share child care on a fairly equal basis, fathers are more likely to 'play' with their children while mothers still carry out most of the 'caretaking' activities" (Sidel, 1990, p. 203). Once again I ask whether these women are likely to find a man who will truly share the house and child care.

Although the women in the study eagerly desire a husband who will be willing to share the home responsibilities, current studies (Baruch & Barnett, 1983; Hochschild, 1989; Sidel, 1990; Walters, 1993) offer little encouragement for them. This tension is often the cause of broken relationships and divorce. The cultural devaluation of care-giving reflected in the reluctance of men to enter into that domain ultimately deteriorates women's hopes for equality. Reaffirming the importance of the shared caring in the family, McGrath's (1990, 1992) studies of women and depression closely link the husband's attitude toward sharing home responsibilities to the marital health of the couple and the working mother's emotional well-being. This will be addressed more completely in the discussion of women combining multiple roles.

Perhaps the broader ramifications of this study involve the quality of care for children in our society. In Sidel's (1990) book, she devotes a chapter to the question: "Who will care for the children?" Hochschild (1989) views the marital tension which arises due to lack of time spent on home care duties as the most potentially damaging for marriages:

> Men and women may gradually come to share the work at home more equitably, but now they may be doing altogether less of it. The latent deal between husband and wife is "I'll share, but we'll do less." A strategy of "cutting back" on the housework, the children, [sic]the marriage may be on the rise, with correspondingly reduced ideas about what people "need." (p. 209)

It seems that children's needs are often overlooked in the battle for equality between husbands and wives. Perhaps we have grown accustomed to men being uninvolved in child care, but, are we prepared to accept mother's drifting away from their children as well? Or are we going to seek more positive alternatives in order to adequately meet the needs of children, mothers and fathers ?

Sidel (1990) describes her interactions with the college women she interviewed: "When it comes to matters at home, a distant, vague, distracted look comes into their eyes, and suddenly they become hesitant and inconclusive." She adds in conclusion:

> I think they are avoiding a close look because it scares them. It isn't just one or two young women who avoid it; there seems to be a collective decision not to look. For all the media attention given the working mother, young women are not asking what major changes we need to make the two-job family work well. (p. 264)

Although the women in the present study talked about role issues, there was a reluctance to suggest any reason for concern - they were optimistic. However, I remember seeing a similar glazed look to what Sidel refers to, especially when I asked how they pictured themselves as mothers - I got only minimal responses, a lot of nervous laughter and "I don't knows." Because they were able to discuss the importance of child care in other contexts I wonder if the title "mother" seems uncomfortable for them. A possible explanation may be what Pantony (1994) describes as negativity attached to the mother role through disempowerment of mothers in our society as well as "mother blaming." Tanguay and Streit (1994) demonstrate in their study what seems like a truth women have always known, but have forgotten in more recent times; motherhood is at the core of a mother's identity. Although the women in this study anticipate being mothers they made little reference to this core in their self-descriptions.

Perhaps what distinguishes the women I interviewed from the neotraditionalists Sidel (1990) describes is their attitude of flexibility. In contrast to the neotraditionalist's attitude of ambivalence, which Sidel defines as dual role fantasy, the women in this study hold flexibility in high esteem, perhaps as a contingency move to accommodate family needs. Perhaps the women I interviewed are simply more traditional, valuing family and care-giving over their career desires. These women may also have a more realistic assessment of what is required in raising children, and are planning accordingly. In view of divorce rates, these women may end up paying a price for their domesticity and dependence on marriage in achieving their family goals. This is a danger which some women in this study referred to as a reason for keeping their careers available - "to fall back on," although this is inconsistent with their desires for marriage and equal partnering.

Combining Career And Family Roles

Three million Canadian women currently combine motherhood with full-time careers (CTV Newscast, July 22, 1994). Each woman I talked to had a loosely held plan about how she would combine career and family roles, hoping to realistically achieve her goals. As O'Brien and Fassinger (1993) suggest, a major need for young women is considering how "to select a career that will enable them to function and succeed in the multiple roles of parent, partner, and worker" (p. 456).

Betz and Fitzgerald's (1987) treatment of career and homemaking orientations on a continuum certainly fits in these women's experiences. An intricate interweaving of career plans with family plans is required to maintain the balance these women desire. As they envision their futures, a complex matrix is employed involving the timing and prioritizing of their different pursuits. Sequencing is a term which describes how and when these women decide to pursue their roles (Sullivan, 1992).

The most poignant sequencing theme for these women is their decision to pursue their careers first and family later. There is immense pressure to have their career established soon, fearing they will not have the flexibility to change later in life. Other sequencing issues they deal with include when to have children, when to work full-time or part-time, and when to be at home full-time with children. These sequencing decisions are usually based on values the women hold about family, career and lifestyles.

Tanguay and Streit (1994) suggest that combining multiple roles can in fact contribute to women's mental health, referring to the expansion hypothesis which stresses the benefits of this lifestyle. Investigating the quality of the women's roles, in their study, revealed that, for working mothers, the "maternal role experience remains crucial to professional women's health. The failure to fulfill one's maternal ideals seems to make working women more vulnerable to psychological distress" (p. 93). Betz and Fitzgerald's (1987) statement, "the perceived philosophical incompatibility of the biological role of wife/mother with the social role of worker is the most salient factor in women's career development is one of the major assumptions of this book," (p. 203) seems to be supported by the women's uncertainty as they anticipate their future roles. Betz and Fitzgerald's conclusion that we simply do not know the effects, especially on young children, of mother's absence from the home may explain these women's cautious planning.

Most of the women know they want to be home before their children begin school. However, they openly admit that they don't know how this desire will mesh with their need to continue working in order to keep up their professional skills. They question the realism of their dream to combine career and family. The women know they would regret losing the investment they have put into being trained for their professions. Financial, professional and biological pressures seem to weigh on them. As one woman said, "you only have a certain amount of time to have kids."

Hochschild (1989) found that the women she interviewed (all in dual career couples with children) constantly worked at trying to change the imbalance of labor in their homes.

> One reason the effort is so common among women is that they bear the weight of a contradiction between traditional ideology and modern circumstances. Unless they assume the extra work of changing the division of labor it is usually they who work the extra month a year. (p. 194)

Consequently, women not only experience a wage gap at work, but a leisure gap at home. Hochschild (1989) describes this inequity as the "second shift" which she finds women perform after they get home from their jobs. She estimates women average an extra month of work over the course of a year. Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) report that although women try to employ coping methods (Epstein, 1970; Johnson & Johnson 1977; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1972; Van Dusen and Sheldon, 1976) they often fall victim to the "superwoman syndrome".

Unfortunately, the outcome of this widespread double duty phenomenon is women's health deterioration. Many women continue to try to "do it all," alone. Hollinger (1991) cautions women about the harmful effects of buying into the superwoman image, referring to reactions such as stress, burnout, depression, and substance abuse. Walters' (1993) study of Canadian women confirms prior statistics about the prevalence of depression (35%), anxiety (44.4%), and stress (60.4%). In this study significantly more part-time employed women (42.9%) reported depression than full-time employed women (26.4%). Additionally, describing their past six months, 68% of the women surveyed reported feeling tiredness, 46.1% reported having no time to herself, and 46.1% reported interrupted sleep. These problems were connected to the influence of the women's social context, particularly emphasizing "the importance of gender roles and images of women... They described the heavy workload of women, issues of identity and their social legacies" (abstract).

The unsettling aspect of the descriptions in Walters' study was the women's tendency to normalize their pain because they believe they are "supposed" to cope with their stress, anxiety and depression - and the causes of them.

McGrath (1992) also supports Hollinger's (1991) warning in her research on women and depression. Referring to the traditional core which she feels women are socialized to fulfill she describes the female gender role as based on social legacies of tradition which are very unrealistic for our times. Stating that the truly traditional woman has vanished, she concludes: "the conflict between the traditional core and the realities of modern life plant seeds of anger, resentment, low self-esteem, even self-hatred as women struggle to find the 'right' answer during a time of such cultural collision" (p. 61). McGrath believes that depression is a normal and healthy reaction to circumstances of conflict. Among the types of depressions women in our society experience she names depletion depression which is a vulnerability for the working mother which she defines as "being chronically tired, overwhelmed, stressed, and drained by the role demands and role conflicts confronting contemporary women" (p. 199).

The women in this study vacillate between the ideal and the real. For most of them dreaming of "having it all" is consistently tempered with trying to anticipate reality, avoiding what pitfalls they can see and hoping for the best. Their rosy dreams and desires are superimposed with the gray reality of worrying and wondering what their alternatives are and wrestling with priorities given each alteration of their dream.

Part II - Past And Present *Influences*

The participants interviewed in this study referred to three main sources of influence in their lives regarding their career and family roles. They each mentioned their mother as a key source of influence. They also agreed on the influence of their families;

their parents all encouraged their career achievements and several family relationships and experiences reinforced their achievement goals. Another source of influence they agreed on was society; they react to the views which differed from their own and identify conflicting messages in the media aimed at women.

The two most powerful influences mentioned were their mothers and society. Their mothers' influences were easily identified while society's influence was more abstruse. Although the literature speaks to the influence of family on young women, it does not support the degree of the influence of families and mothers that the women in this study expressed.

Mother Influence

Model Of Career

Each of the participants told me about their mothers' career experiences. Each mother positively and negatively influenced her daughter through her career decisions and experiences. Most of the mothers combined career and family roles, one modeled achievement and personal success, two of the mothers quit their professions once they had children, and two of the women saw their mothers' career advancement limited by their family responsibilities.

Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) report that the research on working mothers' influences on their daughters, which has been studied in great detail, suggests that working mothers are "an important and positive influence on their daughters' career development" (p. 44). Stephan and Corder (1985) state that women raised by dual-career parents are more likely to combine career and family roles than women raised in traditional families. The women in this study were raised in predominantly traditional families (although their mother's worked in varying degrees) yet they all plan on combining career and family roles. The influences of their mothers' career examples may be modified by several other influences.

Model Of Gender Behaviour

Within the family as they modeled what it means to be a woman, the mothers' examples of gender behaviour had a profound effect on these women. Although all of the mothers mentioned in this study trained for careers and combined career and family roles to some extent, two of the mothers exemplified more traditional female roles of giving to the family, and two of the mothers assumed more authoritative roles in the family. Again, Betz and Fitzgerald's (1987) findings may assist our understanding of the complex relationship between mothers and daughters in the acquisition of gender roles. They assert that

> "society [perhaps in this case, society *through* mothers] influences girls and young women to limit their life roles and occupational options on the basis of gender alone, without regard for or interest in their unique individual capabilities and potentials for development. Bem and Bem (1976) have referred to this phenomenon as the "homogenization" of the American woman" (p. 36).

The authors also suggest that subtleties of the parent-child relationship, such as closeness, emotional support, or identification often moderate more obvious variables such as the mother's education level or career history. These individual differences were evident in the women's stories.

Model Of Parenting

The mothers' examples of self-sacrifice and leadership as mothers evokes an emotional reaction from the women as they anticipate their own roles as mothers. Tara, Ashley and Dani aim to follow in their mothers footsteps. Marie responds to the emotional neglect she experienced by determining to meet those needs for her own children and for other people through her profession.

Hochschild (1989) speaks of the role of mother in our society as a "preserver of domestic tradition" who transmits a family's heritage to the next generation. She found most women wanted to preserve their heritage but simply did not have time to perform the high standards of cooking and detailed, thoughtful acts of care-giving modeled by their mothers.

Modern women, are often put in conflict with their own mother's standards of housekeeping and childrearing. The women in this study talked about anticipating feeling guilty over possibly not being home with their children. In one case, a participant said she aims to lower her standard's to avoid her mother's situation. Hancock's (1989) theory supports the idea of daughters avoiding their mother's situations.

> The mother-daughter relationship is especially perplexing for the contemporary woman who pursues achievement. In striving to be a full-fledged member of "the real world," she rejects the roles that bound her mother to the domestic realm. She sees in her mother's history traps she is convinced she must avoid. Determined not to sink in the quicksand beneath her mother's feet, the woman of today resists the pull of this relationship as she strikes out on her own. (p. 185)

Again, admiring and wanting to model oneself after "Mom" collides with realistic circumstances which are hard for these women to ignore.

Washor-Liebhaber (1982) states that mothers' attitudes about employment have a powerful effect, perhaps imbuing more independence and confidence in their daughters. While three of the mothers in this study provided positive career models, the daughters reported mixed feelings about their mother's situations. Some want to avoid their mother's experience while others feel they must live up to their mothers' standards of career success in addition to the caregiving legacies.

Family Influence

Parent Expectations

Parental expectations to achieve as well as other family relationships and experiences influence these women's priorities. They all mentioned being encouraged to get an education and develop a career in order to be independent. The women specifically mentioned their parents' unified influence on their planning for education and careers. Most identify a comfort with the support and encouragement they have received. Overall, each parent wished for their daughter to be financially independent and aware that she can pursue her goals and dreams.

I was struck with the parents firm advice for their daughters to become independent, self-supporting and financially secure and yet their silence when it came to marriage and family goals. Is there a taboo against talking with daughters about family roles, while marriage and family goals are quietly expected? Perhaps this is motivated by the parents' fear of their daughter's financial well-being, wanting her to be secure (and not dependent on them), along with the parents' uncertainty about how their daughters will realistically combine their roles. If the general society has no solution for young women today, it makes sense that parents are not offering solutions, or even advice to their daughters since they may also be caught in the conflict between career and traditional roles.

Parental strategies with their daughters seem to reflect the social climate quite directly. The double message to pursue independence and dependence is evident in these parent's influence on their daughters. The social climate seems to be moderated and filtered through the women's families and other relationships on several of these issues.

Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) report that the body of research concerning the influence of parental relationships on daughters is too small to draw any conclusions. Overall, they suggest that parental encouragement seems important, which the findings of this study support. In addition the research on expectancies for success (Eccles *et al.*, 1983, 1984) may contribute to our understanding of these women's experiences. Perhaps these parents' encouragement and subtle expectations to pursue education and careers boosts these womens' self-efficacy and self expectancies.

Societal Influence

Overall, these women view society as a subtle yet powerful force which restricts women's opportunity and freedom of behaviour, often on the basis of gender. Although the women found specific social messages difficult to isolate, they all referred to general views which they perceive as different from their own personal values (i.e. women's advancement through careers; socially defined norms for women's unassertive behaviour; and small town socialization of women not to "move on").

Hancock (1989) frames the problem of gender socialization and identity development in terms of the power of the complex forces involved in adolescent physical development:

> Conformity marks the era of the older girl, in spite of changing times. Seldom permitted to be a tomboy once her features begin to change, she is expected even now, to "behave like a young lady." Taken out of the tree house of her earlier days, the girl is tuned to the human environment and expected to cultivate social graces. The feminine mandate to care for others persists beneath the modern whitewash, stifling her impulse to climb, to run, to scale a ridge - and to otherwise follow her active pursuits. Whereas her childhood competence knew no bounds, her feminine effectiveness is channeled into the interpersonal realm as she approaches puberty. In this realm, where little is under direct control, muddled feedback clouds her clarity; the pure effects of her actions amid social nuance grow dilute...
>
> As the older girl succumbs to the culture's image of the female, her childhood displays give way to hiding - skills, excellence, aspirations, parts of the self - first from others in order to please, eventually also from herself. The unity of her activities falls away as her own goals are cast against a "womanly" life. Female roles impinge; stereotypes take over...
>
> The official culture - a patriarchal structure that places its lock on her mother, aunts, cousins, friends, and her father - defines her as female instead of as person. The link between who she is and what she does is twisted. She gives up "doing" in favor of "being" a good girl. Instead of suiting herself, she tries to please those around her. Impressed with the importance of other's opinions, she molds herself to what she thinks they want her to be...
>
> No matter how proud she may be of "becoming a woman," these physical changes hamper a girl's freedom and weaken the confidence she earlier placed in her physical skills...
>
> While the boy's pubertal changes portend an increased ability to dominate, the girl's imply, recurrently, the mandate to nurture and the need for restraint...
>
> The girl-world of eight or nine thus gives way, long before adolescence, to a world divided by sex. (p. 18-20)

Washburn, (1994) in her discussion of gender role development and female achievement, frames the problem of gender socialization as a socially constructed ideology. She warns women to be aware of the culture's power to limit their opportunities through cultural language, definitions and ideologies of achievement and gender roles:

> Females are thereby stranded in a medium that defines who they are and for which roles they are suited... As such it is important to recognize the way in which

> representations of gender and achievement are social constructions which influence females' self-perceptions, aspirations and life choices. (p. 147)

Conarton and Silverman (1988) believe women feel they are expected to be a "pseudo-man" - able to function on both feminine and masculine levels. This hyperadaptibility which our society has come to value as the "superwoman" is a twisted perversion of female abilities. There is agreement in the literature that society devalues mothering, femininity, care, nurture, and family (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, Vogel, 1970; Greenspan, 1993; Hancock, 1989; Hashizume & Crozier, 1994; Hochschild, 1989; Miller, 1986; Pantony, 1994; Richardson, 1979). Hochschild (1989) illustrates this devaluation referring to the work of women in the home as that of the peasant in comparison with the urban man who goes off to work. Her labor is unrefined, menial, dealing with mere children; it is unpaid work. Any work she may do outside the home is performed around the demands of husband's work, which she is dependent upon. She is less civilized.

Women as care-givers are marginalized, devalued, and given little recognition or reward for achieving at what they do best. Many women have moved into the male arena for validation of their abilities and worth as contributors to society. However, Hochschild declares,

> as the role of the homemaker is being vacated by many women, the homemaker's work has been devalued and passed on to low-paid housekeepers, baby-sitters, and daycare workers. Like an ethnic culture in danger of being swallowed up by the culture of the dominant group, the contribution of the traditional homemaker has been devalued first by men and now by more women (p. 215).

The male patriarchy keeps power in their own hands allowing women no viable choices, and no freedom to move within their narrow socialized gender role. More holistic work roles which incorporate women's care-giving abilities and receive social recognition remain a goal we must to work towards. Richardson (1981) offers a reasonable rationale for the treatment of family and career roles as a continuum of work, thus legitimizing the importance of work-family interaction, rather than separation.

The findings of this study concur with Hashizume and Crozier's (1994) paper on women's career achievement. Similar to Lipmen-Blumen, Handley-Isaksen, and Leavitt's (1983) approach to achievement, they differentiate between a woman's sense of power through relational achievement compared to society's male standard of achievement through career advancement and financial success. They say encouraging women to pursue careers through this route of achievement only prolongs the male bias promulgated in our society. This cheats women of a holistic lifestyle involving family and relationship domains in which they are known for achieving.

> It appears that we need to develop a new definition of achievement which incorporates the characteristics and behaviours which are valued by women, and which recognizes and values achievement in a range of roles and domains as both legitimate and worthwhile (p. 144).

Double Messages

The double messages which the women identified emphasize the importance of both women's careers and the family care-giving role. For these women the conflicting messages they receive create feelings of confusion about finding roles which fit personally for them and anger about the "no win" situations they often find themselves in.

The literature is replete with references to conflicting messages about career and family (Baber & Monaghan, 1988; Conarton & Silverman, 1988; Farmer, 1984, 1989; Hollinger, 1991; Holms & Esses, 1988; Miller, 1986; Roberts & Newton, 1987; Tipping & Farmer, 1991). Hancock (1989) illustrates the bind of women who are socialized to be care-givers while society devalues mothering. She refers to a host of career women who deny their desire to have families, fearing any association with femininity will weaken their career edge.

Other social icons portray a similar bind for women. There is, for instance, the icon of the glamorous yet guilt ridden career mom, who, after her 10 hour work day, picks up her child from day care; or, there is the depressed stay-at-home mom, baking bread and cookies for her family. Both extremes represent the potency, yet unreality, with which society represents women's experience. Would these icons exist if socially recognized achievement was not measured by male standards?

Referring to the social pressures for women to succeed in careers and have families - to have it all - Sidel (1990) points out the corresponding, yet conflicting message that women, in reality, cannot have it all.

> The fundamental message seems to be that while women's lives have changed dramatically because so many of them are in the work force, supporting or at the very least helping to support themselves and their families, many other aspects of their lives have changed very little. The message is that women can be successful in the workplace and look the part as well but had better not forget how to be provocative, sexy, dependent; that women are to be in charge of their own lives yet "carried away" either by their own feelings or by men; that women can be it all , have it all, and do it all, but while ability and hard work are important, looks are still crucial. With the right clothes and the right look - in other words, the right packaging - women can market themselves the way any other commodity is marketed and achieve their dreams in both the public and private sphere. (p. 113)

Ruth Sidel asks "have women, in short, been hoodwinked into believing that they can 'have it all, do it all, be it all' while society itself changes minimally?" (p. 224) As a result of viewing the inexhaustible evidence of double messages aimed at women in our society, I have come to conclude that women really do not have choices! Whether they will be valued in this culture is not in their control. They are stuck, marginalized, and not valued for who they are and what they do best. We must recognize that social change is slow and that today's young women have few options for finding reasonable validation for their whole persons. In light of this reality, how can we help young women prepare for their futures most holistically and optimistically?

Part III - The Present *Experience*

The last section of results addresses the question of how these women are presently influenced by various views on women's career and family roles in the midst of their career-decision-making process. How are they reacting, what are they feeling and thinking and how are they coping in the present as they anticipate the future?

All the women highly regard caring for others. This is demonstrated in their family desires, in terms of planning to stay home with children, as well as their people-helping careers. When prioritizing their roles, four of the women placed family roles ahead of their career roles.

While the women consistently indicated a willingness and interest in care-giving roles, they also declared a fear of losing personal control, such as not getting their own needs met, or not having the flexibility to change careers. A conflict between caring for others and caring for themselves became evident. For three of the women, seeing their mothers suffer personally from habitual self-sacrifice deters them from doing the same in their own lives. The women each express their own ways of coping with their fear, some by determining a course of action to prevent over-extension, while others seem more immobilized by the fear.

The women all acknowledge the importance of maintaining their freedom to be themselves by making their own decisions and acting according to their own desires and needs. Specifically, they view constant caring for others, constant self-sacrifice and neglect of their own personal rejuvenation as the main threats to their identities.

Ashley and Marie do not want their lives to be as self-sacrificial as their mothers. Ashley wants to be able to enjoy her life and to receive care from others rather than always caring for others. Similarly, Marie hopes to find a balance between caring for others and not giving up her own desires. It seems that ever since childhood Lori has feared a loss of herself. However, her instinctual anger has protected the woman she knows she is and her determination propels her beyond the boundaries of the confining social roles she grew up with. Dani has decided she will get her career before her family responsibilities prevent her from pursuing her own interests. Tara clearly aims to not be limited by society's views. She allows no one to define her but herself; she will do what is right for her.

These women's fears make perfect sense in light of their relational orientation (Evans, 1985; Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1986; Surrey, 1985). Their desire is to be connected with others, rather than isolated. As these women determine not to be dominated, rather to be independent, they may unexpectedly end up alone; as they seek to have their achievement desires fulfilled through careers, they may lose valued relationships; as they take the role of "the caring one" in their families, they may find themselves uncared for. This cycle of "give and no take"- seeking meaningful achievements but not finding validation - is what these women desperately want to avoid. Seeing few pathways to follow, these women need a greater awareness of the cycle which keeps them in roles which preclude their personal needs.

Dana Crowley Jack (1991) offers a perspective on women's experience of losing self which sheds light on these women's experience. She refers to the broad symptomatology of depression to discuss women's experience of being silenced by our culture. Under the influence of Carol Gilligan, Jack places women's orientation to relationships as central to their identity and states that hearing women's words about their relational experience will be the only way to elevate that which has been pushed down and depressed - the self.

In relational theory, Jack (1991) says attachments are considered the building blocks of the psyche - relationships are the goal of development. From this perspective we see that women will go to extremes in order to preserve relationships - accommodating to other's preferences, expectations, strengths or weaknesses can be the beginning of altering one's self.

Jack, (1992) in line with Gilligan and Miller's research, articulates a theory of differentiation unique to women where the "assertion of one's agency - one's needs, feelings, capacities- within relationships" (p. 13) is the way we discover healthy differences from one another. Within this paradigm, development of one's abilities and uniqueness is through relationships.

Although it has been found that the presence of intimate relationships when combined with other stressful risks serve as a shield to depression, the traditional female gender role is considered responsible for women's depression. Often within relationships women describe losing their ability to speak authoritatively about their own lives. Cultural images predict their existence - they conform, shutting down large parts of their experience in an attempt to fit in. Finally, the process of loss of self is sealed through the cultural taboo against expressing dissatisfaction and entering into conflict.

Very often the marriage relationship is a source of subordination and isolation wherein women lose their own sense of direction and goals. The wife and mother role eventually became perceived as an uninvited bind. Women begin to realize that they are held responsible for everyone's welfare in their life, except their own, and that they have no power or authority to perform this responsibility. Harmon (1977) using Maslow's hierarchy of human needs suggests that homemakers may not learn to effectively gratify their own needs because it is traditional to rely on one's father or husband for what they need. She asserts that higher-order needs such as esteem and self-actualization are less often expressed by homemakers compared to working women. Betz (1982) backs up this theory in her study which revealed that homemakers reported greatest deficits in esteem needs while meeting their needs for autonomy was primary for employed women.

The conventional female role particularly draws on the deeply established cultural norms about women's responsibilities around self sacrifice, and caring for others. Miller (1986) says many women ask themselves if they are giving enough to others, while only hoping they might get their own needs met. Within this image there is a strong taboo against change, movement, attempts to get needs met and expressing anger. The powerlessness to act and speak directly to these injustices become a deep source of anger and frustration.

Many women begin to realize that their roles have become their moral responsibility, which Jack describes as the part of the self called the "Over-Eye" - the moral conscience. Through a two voice analysis, "it becomes clear that what women lose in depression is not the whole self but only a part of the self: the 'I', the authentic, creative self" (p. 101). Through the identification of voice, Jack says, "we locate ourselves in the world and can be heard and found" (p. 103).

This beginning of hearing one's voice leads to what Jack calls movement through dialogue. Integration of the selves is gradually worked on through a process of questioning the status quo, and asking for needs to be met; seeing things through one's authentic "I"; valuing one's own goals and direction and accepting support from others.

Just as Jack warns women about personal bankruptcy through caring and accommodating to others, Hancock (1989) warns women of a related illusion - fulfillment in careers at the expense of one's feminine self:

> As the illusion grows stronger, women become less conscious of the split between who they appear to be and who they "really" are. The lack of real choice, and the fact that this lack is camouflaged, sends women veering around a dangerous curve on the route to the development of the authentic self. (p. 34)

Hancock (1989) quotes a woman who powerfully sums up her present experience. "Being a female makes it harder to become oneself. The culture offers escapes: patterns of womanhood" (p. 108). However, the roles we take for granted are often only patterns, icons, and cheap portrayals which trivialize the real experience of women, leading us astray from our authentic selves.

Guiding Beliefs

As I read and re-read the transcripts of the interviews with these women I began to discern a guiding *sense of self* which each woman referred to. Awareness of their convictions about what is important to them, what they value and what they want in life has emerged for these women at different times in their lives which serves as a reference point.

For most of the women, their awareness of their values, needs and guiding beliefs came partially through their family experience - through both crisis and stability. Other experiences in relationships have solidified their convictions. Lori articulated her need to know and maintain a sense of identity in the midst of the many changing ideas around her, desiring to integrate who she is and who she can be. I felt this comment provided a good summation of what several of the women were saying either directly or indirectly.

The core beliefs that guide these women in the midst of their career-decision-making process reflect what they have come to value most in their lives. Ashley has learned from her family that hard work is important yet she will aim for more balance, making more time to enjoy her life. For Dani, "doing her best" will be the attitude that will guide her through life's twists and turns. Marie lives in a perpetual tension between desiring family and career and being personally satisfied that she has not shortchanged herself along the way. Tara lives by the motto, "do what is right for you." She believes in her ability to overcome any barriers that may come her way. Lori's ideals make it difficult for her to make decisions in the present. She relies on her hope of finding a career that will allow her to be herself, and on trusting herself in the midst of many unknowns.

The women all made statements about what really matters to them. These core beliefs offer strength, stability, hope and direction to the women as they grapple with changing social mores, and antiquated roles for women. They rely on these touch points of self as they anticipate their unknown futures.

In addition to Jack's discussion of the importance of identifying the authentic "I" and specifically finding movement in dialogue, other researchers speak to the importance of self-understanding.

Hancock (1989) uses specific terms which have come to hold very deep meaning for me as I have journeyed through this research process. Reading her book, *The girl within,* I found the following words and phrases echoing the words and phrases I used as I coded and interpreted the interview transcripts. This provided a strong confirmation as I sensed a real "fittingness" of her descriptions with the participant's experiences, as well as my own. In her discussion of female identity she describes the **"matrix"** of growth a woman experiences as she grows up, wherein her multiple roles interact to clarify her identity. She talks about the importance **"defining the self"** through **"self reflection"** in this complex process. Hancock talks about women's **"awareness being jolted"** about what **"she wants"** and how this "**personal realization"** motivates continued growth.

Hancock (1989) emphasizes the importance of circling back to girlhood to find this awareness. She suggests that we may touch on our core of self by recalling our girlhood, a time when our dreams and confidence were unquestioned and our identities strong. As a woman experiences life day-to-day and as various roles are performed, she moves in and out of focus with her core sense of self. Constantly looping through a figure eight pattern, she moves away from clearly decided beliefs, then swings back through the core of self, her touch point. With each pass through the core self a woman's sense of her beliefs about her environment and herself are solidified. She is capable of discerning the influences which surround her, and makes her own choices, based on her self-understanding.

Brennan and Rosenzweig (1990) agree that "woman's self-understanding, evolves through the interplay among the relationships, roles, and work in which she engages." They add that "when the incongruence is too great, a woman may make adjustments in her work and relationships to bring them in line with her self-understanding" (p. 527).

> At all times of the life cycle, young woman-hood as well as old age, the interplay between demands in the roles found in different life domains is a crucial spur to a woman's development. As a woman's roles, relationships and work change over time, her self-understanding grows, the woman is able to take on and let go of roles, relationships, and work that create further development challenges. In other words, as women test their self-understanding in the various life domains, they come to a clearer idea of who they are. (p. 531)

Carol Gilligan's (1982) theory suggests that the struggle women experience between love and work opens up a pathway to maturity, where the perspectives of the connected and separate selves seek to find a way to converge.

> Attachment and separation anchor the cycle of human life, describing the biology of human reproduction and the psychology of human development. The concepts of attachment and separation that depict the nature and sequence of infant development appear in adolescence as identity and intimacy and then in adulthood as **love and work** [bold added]. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 151)

Gilligan lays an epistemological foundation for this notion, delineating the separate and connected selves of men and women as reiterative counterpoint anchoring the life cycle. The conflict between separation and connection; identity and intimacy; love and work underlies the dilemma of this study. Therefore, Gilligan's explanation of the human need for convergence of the separate and connected selves offers an enlightening conclusion to this study. Gilligan suggests that both integrity and care must be included in a morality that can encompass the dilemmas of love and work. The assumption that the human desire is to integrate one's selves, to be whole, to be centered, not minimized, not lost, or depressed, but whole, healthy, real and true to self is supported by the expressions of the women in this study.

Johnson Smith and Leduc's (1992) culminating statements about the roles of socialization, chance and choice in women's career paths shed light on the interpretations of this study. Socialization has been verified as a central influence in the lives of these women. However, the influences of choice and chance seem less clear. At first glance these young women's career-decision-making process appears to be guided more by chance than by choice. Perhaps what the women have expressed about their complex, multi-influenced, multi-directional paths for their futures appears haphazard. However, each woman's decision making can be traced to an either cognizant or non cognizant belief about herself, her abilities, her values and her world.

The women in this study have clearly presented the multiple and often conflicting messages which influence their decisions. They have illustrated the process of discerning what matters most to them. They have revealed the tensions and confusion they live in as they seek to work and love. It is no wonder that this process appears to be out of their control. However, as one women in the study stated, ***"I guess a part of me knew what was going on."*** Perhaps this is how we can best help women prepare for their future careers; by helping them get in touch with that part of them which knows what is going on they will be empowered to make appropriate choices for their lives.

CHAPTER 6

CONTINUING ISSUES

The following eight issues have been raised by the women's responses to the research question. These issues reflect the content of these responses as well as my own reactions to the findings, including my personal and professional experiences and the perspectives of the literature reviewed. Suggestions for further research, and counselling and student affairs implications are also offered.

Early in the results the women's "want" statements informed us of their dreams, desires and designs for their lives. In many ways, what they want for their futures speaks to what they value in the present. The women plan to combine marriage, mother and career roles. The main influences regarding women's roles they identified were their mothers, parents and other family experiences as well as various societal views including frustrating double messages. These influences mold and help clarify their awareness of their own values and often confuse and stymie the women. As the women disclosed what they are presently experiencing about role issues they expressed guiding beliefs regarding what they value about themselves and what they believe to be possible for their futures. In the midst of believing that they are care-givers, yet fearful of losing parts of themselves, the women reveal what they believe is ultimately most important in life: how to survive and respect themselves, and how to seek congruence as their roles pull them in different directions. They articulate the core beliefs that keep them hopeful about their futures.

Issues Raised

1) As these women anticipate their futures, they speak of rosy dreams yet the literature suggests they may face some gray realities.

- Support may be offered by counsellors and student affairs personnel to women as they face the **economic realities, relational realities, and gender**

socialization realities which may affect their futures. Flexibility may be encouraged in order to prevent narrow expectations.

- With the current downward spiraling standard of living will these women be the poor of tomorrow? We must continue to demand equal wages and opportunity for women (Hancock, 1989).

- Counsellors may encourage women to squarely face the reality of divorce statistics. Dependence on husbands, and neglect of their own interests and abilities may put them at risk.

- Gender socialization realities, particularly male socialization, is slow to change. In view of current statistics and research findings, is it likely that these women will find a man who will share home responsibilities? Individual therapy around values clarification may counter the strong influence of gender socialization.

- Dual-career couples may consider entering counselling together to clarify personal goals, their priorities as a couple and agree on division of home responsibilities, leisure time and time spent at work.

- Women consistently say family support (husbands and children) makes a difference in their career satisfaction - we must encourage this basic source of support (Kahn & Lichty, 1987).

2) The importance of helping women prepare for multiple roles over their lifetime of career development is emphasized as a result of this study.

- Developmental approaches to career development allows for the varied roles and theatres of life to be integrated over time (Super, 1980). Counsellors may refer to Super's statement on the holistic nature of career counselling (Super, 1993).

- Counsellors may make women aware of the overlapping demands women experience as they fulfill multiple roles. "We need to inquire of our clients about the positive aspects of multiple roles as well as the day-to-day experiences of employed single mothers" (Kahn, 1989, p.36).

- Counsellors may make women aware of options for sequencing, the effects of discontinuous employment, and that mates often do not view sequencing in the same way (Sullivan, 1992).

- Stress management, self-assertion and creative problem solving may assist women to cope with multiple roles (Hollinger, 1991). Coping strategies such as Epstein's (1970) may assist women trying to integrate home and work roles.

- Availability of more options and choices in their daily lifestyle and work environments would enable women to fulfill their multiple roles. Appropriate examples may include: more flexible employment such as job sharing; high valuation of day care; paternity or "family" leave (Hochschild, 1989; Forrest & Mikolaitis, 1986); cooperative care employing community solutions.

3) The influence of parents and mothers in terms of women's roles needs more investigation.

The collision of modern realities with mother's traditional standards puts daughters in conflict with them. Counselling may help women find a balance between valuing their mothers and doing what is necessary in their own lives. Parents often encourage independence through careers and dependence through marriage - a double message. They are often silent about their daughter's plans for family roles.

- Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) in evaluation of the methods used in the research they reviewed note the absence of analysis of individual differences. This will be essential in future research, particularly in the investigation of family influences on women .

- Family counselling may open up communication and help mothers and daughters or parents and daughters identify the boundaries that limit their interaction with one another.

- Sandberg, Ehrhardt, Mellins, Ince, and Meyer-Bahlburg (1987) provide helpful insights into the influence of family characteristics on career aspirations of girls.

- Individual or group counselling on mother/daughter issues may prove helpful.

4) Role models and mentors who model multiple role lifestyles could help college women immensely in their career-decision-making process.

- Traditionally, women were taken under their mother's or an aunt's wing to learn their life roles. Mentors are needed who can guide women through multiple role lifestyles in our modern society.

- This study supports the abundant literature suggesting the need for more role models and mentors for young women (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Carden, 1990; Dannells, Rivera, & Knall-Clark, 1992; Erkut & Mokros, 1984; Evans, 1985; Hancock, 1989; Hashizume & Crozier, 1994; Jacobi, 1991).

- Suggesting the role modeling influence of therapists on clients, Kahn (1988) notes, "Female client concerns about family roles and the sharing of household responsibilities, mid-life career change, and multiple life roles are counsellors' concerns too" (p. 247).

5) A more holistic definition of female achievement, involving their career and family roles is an ongoing goal for career and developmental theorists.

- Social messages validating male-oriented achievement encourage unhealthy extremes for women. Young women require assistance in living balanced lifestyles, such as balancing caring for others and caring for themselves.

- As women move into male-oriented work environments they may become increasingly removed from their children. The devalued mother role is a taboo topic for college women which needs to be opened up for discussion.

- In a culture which highly values independence above connection, women's choices are often limited. Increased societal recognition and validation of care-giving abilities, for example financial recognition of people helping professionals (i.e. social workers) is a goal consistent with valuing women's strengths.

- Relational achievement may be validated through increased use of collaborative work and mentoring relationships (Hashizume & Crozier, 1994).

- Other counselling suggestions include talking about the fear of losing competence in some areas of life by focusing in specific areas of life; validating both nontraditional and traditional careers, neither at the expense of each other (Hashizume & Crozier, 1994).

- Linking the home and work place, Dorn (1992) suggests that family dynamics mimic the larger world, and therefore, interpersonal skills learned in the family context may be translated to the work environment.

- Many organizations still view sequencing as a woman's problem. Sullivan (1992) suggests they could actually benefit by appreciating women's and family's patterns of sequencing such as child care needs, job share needs, full-time availability.

6) Integration and Self-understanding are valued as useful mental health guides throughout the life span.

- Movement through dialogue, Jack (1991) suggests, facilitates the integration of women's selves, and helps them value their own goals. Discovering their guiding beliefs may be the most valuable asset for these women.

- "Owning anger and dissatisfaction is the beginning of the ability to self-nurture" (Rosewater, 1988, p. 143) We may assist women in recognizing their anger over the limitations they have experienced in their lives which may facilitate a new freedom to be self-determining and attending to one's own needs. A focus on empowering women in their choices must occur (Miller, 1986; Greenspan, 1993).

- McGrath suggests that depression is a healthy response to the cultural oppression women live under. This reframing of women's resistance is empowering. McGrath's (1992) book, *When Feeling Bad is Good*, provides insights into preventing unhealthy depressions through cultivation of the authentic self.

- Individual therapy may facilitate this movement and ongoing self-understanding throughout the life cycle. Approaching women's developmental over the life span, may encourage a lifestyle approach touching on progressive issues around career-decision-making, marriage, child-rearing, elder care, and/or divorce (Gilligan, 1982; Jack, 1991; Kahn, 1989; Phelps, 1991; Sullivan, 1992).

- Conarton and Silverman (1988) offer an eight phase sequence of women's development culminating in the development of the feminine, empowerment, spiritual development, and integration of masculine skills and feminine truths.

7) Student Affairs implications

- Phelps (1991) articulates the importance of holistic programming for college women:

> Only when a strong sense of identity has been formed can these gifted women choose and act on career aspirations commensurate with their abilities, interests, values and needs. For many women, however, important experiences occur outside of structured learning situations. Thus, extracurricular involvement may become more important (p.141).

- It is important to note that re-entry women constitute a fast-growing proportion of the college and university population (Dannells, Rivera, Knall-Clark, 1992 ; Christian & Wilson, 1985; Glass & Rose, 1987; MacKinnon-Slaney, Barber, & Slaney, 1988).

> Quality academic advising has been described as the cornerstone of student retention, because it is an important component of a staying environment where students can discover and develop their talents to the fullest extent (Dannells, Rivera, Knall-Clark, 1992, p. 239).

- Areas of intervention may include: career choice - validating traditional and non-traditional careers; interpersonal relationships - group work on sex roles or mother/daughter issues; individual self-concept work - depression, body image; lifestyle decisions - use of time in work vs. leisure, standard of living.

- Role conflict is identified as an ongoing issue for women, therefore, Ellickson's and Latona's (1990) model of a graduate women's support group may be modified to serve women in all walks of life. They found female students extremely responsive to the simple group format which addressed their needs around conflicting personal and professional lives.

8) There is a need for longitudinal research on women's career-decision-making process (Stonewater, 1988; Hollinger, 1991).

"The complexity and diversity of women's lives is well established. The who, the how and the why's underlying the decisions women make are much less well understood" (Hollinger, 1991, p. 13).

This study has investigated phenomenologically the dimensions of women's experience as they are influenced by views on women's career and family roles in the midst of the career-decision-making process. More studies are required to understand this complex experience. Longitudinal studies would enhance our appreciation of women's career-decision-making experiences over their life spans.

EPILOGUE

The women who participated in this study expressed their unique experiences and perspectives. The themes which the five women shared in common may be a reflection of other women's experience, as supported by the literature, however, this is only speculation. The degree of generalizability of these findings will depend on the context of other women's experience (Patton, 1990). For example, it is important to note that the women in this study all were preparing for people-helping careers. It may be interesting to compare these women's experience with college women preparing for non-traditional careers. Nevertheless, I have found the women's expressions of their experiences to be harmonious with many of my own experiences, and suggest the findings of this study may be treated as a working hypothesis from which to compare to other women in similar contexts.

Given the time deadline which forces me to conclude this document, I find it difficult to articulate how I have been affected by this research process. Certainly, it has been a rich and rewarding exercise, extremely challenging and at times overwhelming. I appreciate each of the women who so willingly shared their stories. They provided a profoundly meaningful expression of their experiences, being influenced by role issues in the midst of their career-decision-making process. I hope others may learn and be enriched from the themes and issues which I have summarized based on the interviews with these five women.

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APPENDIX A: Letter to Participants

Thank-you for indicating an interest in participating in this research project. In this document you will find a description of the project and its purpose. A detailed description of the participant's role is included in order for you to make an informed decision about your involvement. You will find enclosed a consent form on which your rights and responsibilities are explained. If you make the decision to participate in the project under the rights and responsibilities outlined, please sign the consent form and call me to set up an interview time.

Introduction to the Researcher and Research Question

I am a graduate student in the Educational Psychology department and am presently working on a degree in counselling psychology. As a part of my program I am required to conduct a research project (a thesis). The topic that interests me is about how college women, in the midst of their career-decision-making process are influenced by views on women's career and family roles. The specific question participants will be asked is:

In the midst of the career-decision-making process, how are college women influenced by various views on women's career and family roles?

Secondary questions include:
1)What are the dimensions involved in the career-decision-making process?
2) What are the associated feelings?
3) How do college women anticipate combining work and family roles?
4) Is there a conflict between achievement and traditional roles?(Describe)

This question interests me partly because I have had three years of working experience with college women as a resident director, but also because of my own personal experience as a female student. Now, through my counselling training I have become more focused on the issues that women deal with on a daily basis. I believe that most women in University deal with role issues as they make future plans. I hope that this study will help me and other people understand what this experience is like for college women.

Purpose of the Project

The aim of this study is to understand the experience of college women as they are influenced by role issues in the midst of their career-decision-making process. The ideal goal is to promote a healthy and holistic career-decision-making process for college women. It is hoped that educators, counsellors and student affairs personnel who require constant information on the most current trends influencing students and women of all occupations will benefit from the information provided by the women interviewed.

Method of the Project

The way I have decided to do my research is through interviewing women about their response to my research question. I hope to interview between 7 to 10 women for about one hour each. The interviews will be taped, then I will type up the interviews and compare them with each other to find themes which the interviews share. The written paper will discuss these themes and how they were discovered in a systematic way. Verification of the accuracy of the interpretations and written discussion will be provided by the participants.

Participants Rights and Responsibilities

Participants who agree to be a part of this study **will likely enjoy the process**. The main activity required is a **one hour interview** (approximately) where the researcher listens to the participants response to the research question. This is intended to be a comfortable, and often beneficial experience for the participant. Whenever one enters into an interview situation, discussing one's personal life, views and feelings, there is the possibility of personal discomfort with self disclosing. **It is the participant's right to withdraw from the study at any point, without penalty.**

Participants must agree to have their interviews audio taped and analyzed for themes. The researcher will transcribe the tapes and all identifying information (names) will be changed in written form. **The participants will have the choice to be identified or unidentified in the final paper.** All original **tapes and transcripts will be kept confidential** and securely locked until the completion of the project. At this time all tapes will be erased and original transcripts destroyed.

Within four months of being interviewed the participants will be asked to review the researcher's interpretation and analysis of the interview for accuracy. It will be the researcher's responsibility to ensure this accuracy.
Also, the participants may acquire **copies of the final paper at their own expense.** The unpublished thesis will be available through the University of Alberta Library system.

Given the written consent of participants and the approval of the Educational Psychology Review Committee, the researcher will proceed with the described study under supervision of a Professor of the Educational Psychology department of the University of Alberta.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Please call me if you have any questions you would like answered. (439-0387)

Sincerely,

Karen Charyna

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

I, ______________________________(please print full name), agree to participate in this research project as described in the introductory letter. I understand the rights and responsibilities involved as described, specifically my agreement to be involved in one interview as well as verification of the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any point, without penalty. I understand that on the final written paper, my identity will be withheld unless I give permission otherwise.

Signed, __________________________

Date __________________________

I will be available for interview and verification of the interview during the following months of 1994.

MAY JUNE JULY AUGUST

(please circle the months when you will be available to meet the researcher at the U of A)

APPENDIX C: Interview Guide

In the midst of your career-decision-making process how are you influenced by various views on women's career and family roles?

a)Presently, what are the dimensions involved in your career-decision-making process?
b) What are the associated feelings?
c) In the future, how do you anticipate combining work and family roles?
d) Is there a conflict between work and family roles?(Describe)

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1. What are your plans for the future?
What are your hopes? What do you want more than anything else?
How do you picture your future?

2. How has your career-decision-making process evolved?
What dimensions are involved? (What/who has influenced you?)
How have you found what your gifts/abilities are? (What/who influenced you?)

3. In you career /life planning: (When you think of your future lifestyle)
What can you confidently predict or anticipate? What feels in your control?
What are some of your uncertainties? What feels out of your control?

---

4. What are your present roles?
Career roles? Family roles?
What is the balance between these like? How do they integrate/intertwine?

5. What **views/opinions/messages/models** are you aware of ?
What **views/opinions/messages/models** have you been exposed to?

SOURCES: **media** - magazines, movies, TV, advertising; larger culture
family - parents, siblings, relatives
friends - acquaintances, girlfriends, boyfriends, childhood friends, neighbors
education -university, high school, faculty/teachers, information
role models/ mentors - anyone, heroes friends, teachers parents, aunts, uncles

6. What has been your experience with these **views/opinions/messages/models?**
How have they **influenced/affected/impacted** you? (positive or negative)

7. What roles do you anticipate fulfilling in the future?
How do you envision these roles meshing together?
What kind of role conflict do you anticipate between your career and family roles?
How do you anticipate sequencing your career/family roles?

8. What kind of lifestyle do you anticipate living according to the roles you've been influenced to take on?
(children, career, success, personal pursuits, leisure, recreation, relationships, health, family activities, community activities, fitness, academic, fun, work, sleep)

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9. How did you view women's roles at age 5 10 15 20 ?
What influences were occurring at each age?
What has been your experience?

10. How have women's roles changed? How have the changes influenced you?